Welcome to the
Head Start Self-Assessment:

Your Foundation for Building
Program Excellence

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Introduction

What is a Self-Assessment and why should we do it?

Continuous quality improvement is a central tenet of the Head Start program, with the goal of meeting *Performance Standards* and moving toward program excellence for serving children and families throughout the country. As part of this process, the annual Self-Assessment provides programs with the means to regularly assess their own management systems and program operations in order to continually strengthen the program and the services delivered to children and families.

Head Start Performance Standards clearly state that at least once each program year, with the consultation and participation of the policy groups and, as appropriate, other community members, grantee and delegate agencies must conduct a Self-Assessment of their effectiveness and progress in meeting program goals and objectives and in implementing Federal regulations.

The objectives of Head Start and Early Head Start are clear:

- Enhance children's growth and development
- Strengthen families as the primary nurturers of their children
- Provide children with educational, health and nutritional services
- Link children and families to needed community services
- Ensure well-managed programs that involve parents in decision-making

How can Head Start programs be sure that the services they provide meet these objectives as well as strive to continuously improve the quality of services?

By using the Self-Assessment process described here, grantees can annually assess how specific aspects of their program's operations impact services delivered to children and families. Self-Assessment is not an isolated event, but along with ongoing monitoring, is an integral part of a program's planning cycle. Programs seeking continuous improvement should constantly ask the questions:

- Is the program meeting all national *Head Start Performance Standards*?
- Are our services responding effectively to the changing needs of children and families?
- Are we doing what we need to, or are we just doing it the way we have always done it?
- Can we refine our program design and management systems to further improve outcomes for children and families?

The Self-Assessment process involves the collection of information from a variety of sources to determine if systems and services have been implemented and are working effectively. In the Self-Assessment process we encourage programs to analyze, review and incorporate information from multiple sources, such as ongoing monitoring reports, the *Program Information Report (PIR)*, child outcome data, Community Assessment, and the

Program Review Instrument for Systems Monitoring (PRISM) report. In total this information is used to identify program strengths, determine areas to strengthen, and plan appropriate strategies to effectively address the identified weaknesses of the program.

Who is responsible for the Self-Assessment?

Section 1304.50, Appendix A (Governance and Management Responsibilities), of the *Head Start Program Performance Standards* designates the Head Start program director as having operational responsibility for carrying out the Self-Assessment. Most Head Start directors engage a team of program managers and leaders in outlining a process and timeline for conducting the Self-Assessment and analyzing the results. The results of the Self-Assessment serve as a driving force in determining needs for program improvement. The Self-Assessment portion of the Governance and Management Responsibilities chart is provided below:

Grantee Agency		Delegate Agency		Grantee or Delegate Management Staff	
Governing Body has general responsibility	Policy Council must approve or disapprove	Governing Body has general responsibility	Policy Committee must approve or disapprove	Head Start program director has operating responsibility	Agency director's responsibility is determined locally

How do we ensure shared decision-making?

The Head Start director does not pursue this process alone. The Self-Assessment process provides an opportunity for involving program leaders, such as parents, Policy Council members, governing body members, and community stakeholders, and for making staff more aware of how the program operates and is viewed by its consumers. Through Self-Assessment, Head Start programs reinforce how program leaders engage in shared decision-making.

How does a Self-Assessment differ from the Federal monitoring that occurs every three years?

The primary purpose of Federal monitoring is described in Section 641A(c)(1) of the *Head Start Act*:

> *…to determine whether Head Start agencies meet standards…and results-based educational performance measures developed by the Secretary…with respect to program, administrative, financial management, and other requirements…*

The purpose of Self-Assessment is explained in section 1304.51(i)(1) of the *Head Start Performance Standards* as a method of measuring agency accomplishments, strengths, and weaknesses. Self-Assessment promotes continuous improvement of program service

delivery and quality, as well as focuses attention on issues that arise in the community, the program, and among enrolled families. The processes of Self-Assessment and Federal monitoring complement each other and both are intended to ensure quality. The following table **Comparing Self-Assessment and Federal Monitoring** distinguishes the features of the two forms of review.

Comparing Self-Assessment and Federal Monitoring

Review Process	Schedule	ResponsibleEntity	Instrument	Perspective	How Results are Used
Self-Assessment	At least once a year	Head Start Grantee	Self-Assessment Guide that is comprehensive and based on Head Start Program Performance Standards	Self-critique	Shared with managers, staff and governing bodies; used to develop Program Improvement Plans to reach and exceed compliance
Federal Monitoring	At least every three years	Federal Regional Office	Standardized; Program Review Instrument for Systems Monitoring of Head Start and Early Head Start Grantees (*PRISM*)	Outside Experts	Shared with managers, staff and governing bodies; used to ensure program compliance

Although these two forms of review and quality assurance are similar, Self-Assessment is the annual opportunity for programs to obtain objective and reflective feedback about their ability to meet *Head Start Program Performance Standards* and ensure the delivery of quality services each year.

How long should a Self-Assessment take?

The time required to perform a Self-Assessment will vary with each program. While many programs have thought that the Self-Assessment is extra work, well-managed Head Start programs view the time and effort needed to complete the annual Self-Assessment as an important, integral part of the program year. The Self-Assessment process should allow for the continuation of Head Start services without interruption, yet provide time for staff participating in the process to both gather and contribute information through observations, document reviews, and interviews.

How will this Guide be useful?

This Guide is intended to be a workbook that will help you:

- Review your program's operations and program's management systems
- Analyze the results of the Self-Assessment
- Assess your program's progress in meeting its own goals and objectives
- Identify program strengths
- Identify areas where improvement is needed
- Develop and implement strategies for program improvement
- Identify training and technical assistance needs
- Prepare for a Federal monitoring review
- Ensure quality Head Start services are delivered each year

About this Guide

One of the key management responsibilities of all Head Start programs is to:

> *conduct a Self-Assessment of their effectiveness and progress in meeting program goals and objectives and in implementing Federal regulations…at least once each program year* (1304.51(i)(1) *Head Start Performance Standards*).

Programs are also required to incorporate child outcome data into their Self-Assessment process (ACYF-IM-HS-00-18).

Each Head Start program is required to develop a comprehensive process for Self-Assessment that addresses all of the management systems and service areas that are part of every well-run Head Start program. *Head Start Self-Assessment: Your Foundation for Building Program Excellence* supports programs with their Self-Assessment process.

Historically, many Head Start programs have struggled to develop a system for Self-Assessment. Consequently, many programs have used the existing Federal monitoring instrument, *PRISM*, as a basis for creating their own system because it addresses all of the Federal requirements that Head Start programs must meet.

This Guide, *Head Start Self Assessment: Your Foundation for Building Program Excellence*, assists programs to create a system that provides an in-depth assessment of all Head Start service areas and management systems, yet remains user-friendly and manageable for staff, parents and other participants. This Guide incorporates the essential ingredients of the *PRISM*, as well as feedback received from experienced Head Start directors, program managers, parent leaders, Head Start Bureau and Regional Office staff, the Regional Technical Assistance (TA) Network, and program review team members.

Principles

The workgroup that originally convened to create a vision for this resource developed four key principles to guide the work. They determined that local programs will benefit from a Self-Assessment instrument that:

- Adequately addresses all areas of the *Head Start Performance Standards*
- Can be administered by a diverse Self-Assessment team that includes not only child development and family services professionals, but also governing body members, parents and community representatives
- Promotes an efficient use of time and resources
- Provides valuable information to inform program leaders about ways to strengthen and improve the program

Four Stages of Self-Assessment

This Guide outlines four distinct stages of the Self-Assessment process. Each stage is critical and supports programs in meeting *Head Start Performance Standards* and in building programs of excellence. While it requires programs to devote significant time and energy, this process will culminate in the development and implementation of a plan to meet and exceed standards and promote continuous program improvement.

The Guide is divided into four sections representing the stages of the Self-Assessment process:

>**Stage 1**: Preparing
>**Stage 2**: Collecting and Synthesizing
>**Stage 3**: Interpreting
>**Stage 4**: Strengthening

The first stage is *Preparing Your Self-Assessment*

The Head Start director must take steps to prepare for Self-Assessment by convening a team to lead the process, determining how the program will use the Guide, informing the Policy Council and governing body, selecting and recruiting qualified participants to serve on the various Self-Assessment teams, and informing others who will be affected. Team members need to receive training on the regulations as well as the process they will use to complete the Self-Assessment booklets assigned to their team.

The second stage is *Collecting and Synthesizing the Information*

Once the program has identified the Self-Assessment teams and recruited and trained the members, the teams engage in the actual assessment process. Team members observe activities, review documents, interview people, and record and summarize their findings according to the instructions provided in the eighteen individual Self-Assessment booklets. Using this information, which is based on the eighteen Core Questions in the *PRISM*, team members begin the *analysis process* by synthesizing the data from multiple sources and consolidating this information into a Booklet Analysis. This Booklet Analysis identifies program strengths, specific weaknesses and areas to strengthen.

The third stage is *Interpreting the Information*

Once the Self-Assessment teams have completed their assigned booklets and the team leaders have analyzed the results, their work is then forwarded to the Self-Assessment leadership team. The Self-Assessment leadership team closely examines the booklet analyses. This information is *further analyzed* by displaying the data in a useful manner; establishing patterns of identified needs; uncovering underlying causes and systemic issues; and determining priorities for change and improvement. At this stage, programs should ask for clarifications on regulations or policy from Federal staff, if needed.

The fourth stage is *Strengthening Your Program*

The Self-Assessment has little value unless the program uses the information to drive program improvements. In this final stage, leaders use Self-Assessment results as a driving force to develop program improvement goals, desired outcomes, and action plans.

Both the results of the Self-Assessment and the plan for program improvement should be communicated widely to the governing body, staff, Policy Council, parents, and community partners. Both the Regional Office staff and the TA Network staff can provide assistance and support to Head Start programs as they develop and implement Program Improvement Plans.

Self-Assessment is a Cyclical Process

As indicated below, Self-Assessment is a cyclical process founded on the principles of *Continuous Quality Improvement.* This process requires continually monitoring, evaluating, and improving program quality and outcomes for children and families.

Strengthening the program

Preparing Your Self-Assessment

Interpreting the Information

Collecting and Synthesizing the Information

The impact of *Quality Self-Assessment*

As a result of using *Head Start Self-Assessment: Your Foundation for Building Program Excellence*, programs benefit from:

- Obtaining objective, reliable information about Head Start services and systems
- Promoting shared understanding and appreciation of Head Start goals and *Performance Standards* among the governing body, program stakeholders, and community partners
- Integrating multiple sources of data
- Conducting a thorough analysis of program data
- Creating effective Program Improvement Plans
- Designing meaningful training and technical assistance plans

Together these elements strengthen the program's foundation, support program excellence and lead to the ultimate goal—improved outcomes for children and families. (See chart on the following page).

Improved Outcomes for Children and Families

Strengthening Your Program

↑

Training and Technical Assistance Plan

↑

Program Improvement Plan
Goals Outcomes
Action Steps
Timelines Resources

↑

Interpreting the Data
Analysis of: Strengths
Weaknesses Patterns
Underlying Causes
Priorities

↑

Community Assessment → Results of Federal monitoring (*PRISM*) → Summaries of ongoing monitoring → **Self -Assessment** Information ← *PIR* data ← Summary of Child Outcome data ← Other data sources

FOUR STAGES OF SELF-ASSESSMENT

Stage 1: Preparing Your Self-Assessment

The Self-Assessment leadership team consists of a team of managers who work together to design the Self-Assessment process. The team is led by the Head Start director and may include program managers, representatives from the governing board and policy groups, and community partners.

Helpful Tools:
- Team Assignment Worksheet   ■ Team Leader Worksheet
- Team Participant Worksheet   ■ Self-Assessment Training Worksheet
- Focusing the Assessment Worksheet
- Self-Assessment Timeline Worksheet

Stage 2: Collecting and Synthesizing the Information

Team leaders recruit staff, parents, and community volunteers to serve on their individual assessment teams. Each team is responsible for collecting the information for their assigned Self-Assessment booklets. This information is consolidated and synthesized into Booklet Analyses.

Helpful Tools:
- 18 Self-Assessment Booklets, which include sample observation tools, charts, checklists, and interview questions

Team   Team   Team   Team

Stage 3: Interpreting the Information

The Self-Assessment leadership team reconvenes to review the summary reports prepared during Stage 2. These summaries are reviewed to: identify contained areas of weaknesses, patterns of identified needs and systemic issues; reveal underlying causes; and determine priorities for change and improvement.

Helpful Tools:
- Program Strengths Worksheet
- *PRISM* Framework ■ Priorities Worksheet

Stage 4: Strengthening Your Program

In this final stage, members of the Self-Assessment leadership team design and oversee plans for program improvement and establish a time frame for monitoring and assessing progress.

Helpful Tools:
- Identifying Resources Worksheet   ■ Program Improvement Plan
- Evaluating Your Self-Assessment System   ■ Regional Office Summary Report

Format

Overview of Stages 1, 2, 3 and 4

The first page of each stage of the Guide begins with an overview. The overview identifies key participants and outlines the specific activities that will take place.

Booklets

The largest of the four sections is Stage 2, *Collecting and Synthesizing the Information,* which contains 18 booklets. The booklets correspond to the *PRISM* core questions and each addresses a critical Head Start management system or service area. The *PRISM* core question on Health is made up of two parts, (a) Prevention and Early Intervention and (b) Tracking and Follow-Up. They have been divided into two separate booklets in the Guide. In addition, unlike the *PRISM*, the Guide does not contain a booklet to address Self-Assessment. Instead, you are encouraged to evaluate your Self-Assessment process after completing all four stages. An evaluation form follows in Stage 4 of this Guide.

Sample observation tools, charts, checklists, and interview questions are included as helpful tools in each booklet. Team members may use these tools or modify them as needed to support the Self-Assessment process. Some of these tools have been adapted from the *PRISM* instrument.

All 18 booklets follow a similar format. Each booklet opens with a core question describing the system or service area to be assessed. Next is a compilation of related performance standards and a number of bullets that capture the essence of each section in user-friendly terms. Assessment team members are instructed to pay close attention to this bulleted description to gain a better understanding of the critical elements of each section. Team members are encouraged to review all related Performance Standards and to refer to them repeatedly during the assessment process.

Team members are expected to use the following data collection methods to gather information to complete their booklets:

- Observe (e.g., observing classrooms, Policy Council meetings)
- Review (e.g., various data sources, such as *PRISM, PIR,* Community Assessment, as well as ongoing monitoring reports, written plans, documents, records)
- Interview (e.g., interviewing managers, direct service staff, parents)

Individual team members summarize their work and submit these summaries to their team leaders. Team leaders review these summaries and consolidate and synthesize the information into a Booklet Analysis. These 18 separate Booklet Analyses provide the basis for further distillation and analysis in Stage 3. The Self-Assessment leadership team works to: display the data in a useful manner through the *PRISM* Framework; establish patterns of identified needs; reveal underlying causes and systemic issues; and prioritize goals for strengthening the program.

Assistance is Available

You are not alone in conducting your Self-Assessment. The Regional Office staff, the Regional TA Network, and your colleagues in other Head Start programs are available to support you. In particular, the members of the Head Start TA Network can serve as coaches and facilitators throughout the continuous quality improvement process. The TA staff is trained in the use of the Self-Assessment Guide and can support you through all four stages of the process. We encourage you to fully utilize these resources as you work through the Self-Assessment process to build your program of excellence.

Self-Assessment and the Technical Assistance Network

The TA Network is available to support you throughout your Self-Assessment process. While the TA specialist is not to be assigned to a particular Self-Assessment team, your TA specialist can work with you as you design how the Self-Assessment process will look in your program and assist you in the synthesis and analysis of information, as well as in the development of the Program Improvement and T/TA Plans.

To obtain or download copies of this document…

Head Start Self-Assessment: Your Foundation for Building Program Excellence, is available in electronic format at:

www.HeadStartInfo.org

Stage 1: Preparing Your Self-Assessment

Overview

Key participants in Stage 1 include:

The Self-Assessment leadership team, which is made up of the Head Start director (or designee) and a team of managers and program leaders. The leadership team designs and leads the Self-Assessment process, analyzes the results, and incorporates the results into program improvement efforts. Your assigned TA specialist can work with you as you design how the Self-Assessment process will look in your program.

In this stage you will:

Determine how the Self-Assessment process will look in your program by:

- Introducing *Head Start Self-Assessment: Your Foundation for Building Program Excellence* to Self-Assessment leaders
- Dividing and assigning the responsibilities to make the process more manageable
- Selecting team leaders
- Recruiting participants to serve on your Self-Assessment teams
- Training Self-Assessment teams
- Focusing your assessment
- Establishing a timeline

Consult with the Policy Council in order to:

- Meet the regulatory requirement
- Ensure meaningful participation

Stage 1: Preparing Your Self-Assessment

Determine How the Self-Assessment Process Will Look in Your Program

The *Head Start Self-Assessment: Your Foundation for Building Program Excellence* is a guide to be adapted to meet the individual needs of your program. Stage 1 provides you with helpful tools to assist you as you plan how the Self-Assessment process will look in your program. This planning is essential for the development and implementation of a comprehensive Self-Assessment that yields valuable information for continuous program improvement.

To plan your Self-Assessment, you will need to:
- Convene the Self-Assessment leadership team and introduce them to the Self-Assessment Guide
- Divide the responsibilities among various teams
- Designate Self-Assessment team leaders
- Recruit participants to serve on the Self-Assessment teams
- Provide training for participants
- Focus your Self-Assessment by selecting representative child and family records, centers, classrooms, program options, child care partners, and delegate agencies
- Establish a timeline for completion of Self-Assessment activities
- Present this plan to the Policy Council for review

These steps are described in detail on the following pages, along with examples and helpful worksheets to support the planning process.

Introduce *Head Start Self-Assessment: Your Foundation for Building Program Excellence* to Self-Assessment Leaders

One of the first responsibilities of the Head Start director is to provide Self-Assessment leaders with an understanding and appreciation of the role that Self-Assessment plays in maintaining program quality and fostering positive change and continuous improvement. The director, who by Head Start regulation has operating responsibility for the Self-Assessment process, may choose to facilitate the work of the Self-Assessment leadership team or designate that responsibility to one of its members.

When recruiting members to join the Self-Assessment leadership team, directors need to consider the role of governing bodies, delegates and child care partners on that team. As stated in 1304.51(i)(1) of the *Head Start Program Performance Standards*, the Self-Assessment is conducted *"…with the consultation and participation of the policy groups and, as appropriate, other community members."* Directors should recruit these partners to the table.

The group leader should then share the Guide with the membership. Team members should become familiar with all of the materials, including the instructions, booklets, and data collection instruments. They should discuss why the Self-Assessment is being conducted, who should be involved as team leaders and team members, and whose cooperation is needed in order for it to be successful.

Dividing and Assigning the Responsibilities to Make the Process More Manageable

A quality Self-Assessment takes considerable time and effort. The process of assessing all program services and systems may be more manageable if you divide the responsibilities among various teams, designating program managers and other key decision makers as team leaders. Creating teams will have several advantages:

- The work will be spread among a larger group of individuals to lessen the burden and add depth, knowledge and valuable perspectives of many individuals to the experience
- Staff, parents, Policy Council members, participants, community partners and others serving on Self-Assessment teams will have greater access to team leaders who can provide support and guidance throughout the process
- Individual teams can focus on particular areas or systems that are more appropriate to their experience (e.g. members with expertise in fiscal matters should be on the team which covers this system)
- By recruiting managers and staff representing delegates and child care partners, you are fully investing delegates and partners in the Self-Assessment process. They will gain a fuller understanding of the *Head Start Program Performance Standards* and their importance to a quality program

Programs can determine team assignments by dividing the 18 booklets in a way that makes sense for your program. Factors that can help you determine the number and composition of each group might be:

- Your program's organizational structure and the manner in which responsibilities are assigned to management staff
- The size of your program
- The time it will take to adequately complete each booklet
- Sufficient expertise of members

The following chart illustrates just two examples of ways that the Self-Assessment responsibilities can be divided among various teams. Use these examples to come up with your own configuration and record your decisions on the **Team Assignment Worksheet** provided on page 5.

Sample Team Assignment Worksheet

Example A
TEAM 1: Management Systems

- Governance
- Communication
- Ongoing Monitoring
- Fiscal Management

- Planning
- Record-Keeping & Reporting
- Human Resources
- Child Outcomes

TEAM 2: Child Development and Health Services

- Prevention & Early Intervention
- Disabilities Services
- Tracking and Follow-up

- Individualization
- Curriculum

TEAM 3: Family and Community Partnerships:

- Family Partnership Building
- Community and Child Care Partnerships

- Parent Involvement

TEAM 4: Program Design

- Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance (ERSEA)

- Facilities, Materials, Equipment & Transportation

Example B
TEAM 1: Management

- Community and Child Care Partnerships
- Communication
- Ongoing Monitoring
- Fiscal Management

- Planning
- Record-Keeping & Reporting
- Human Resources
- Facilities, Materials , Equipment & Transportation

TEAM 2: Education and Disabilities

- Individualization
- Disabilities Services

- Curriculum
- Child Outcomes

TEAM 3: Health, Nutrition, and Mental Health

- Prevention and Early Intervention

- Tracking and Follow-up

TEAM 4: Family Partnerships and ERSEA

- Family Partnership Building
- Governance

- Parent Involvement,
- Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance (ERSEA)

Team Assignment Worksheet

Record your decisions about how the Self-Assessment responsibilities should be divided. List the booklets that will be used by each of the teams.

TEAM __ :	
TEAM __ :	
TEAM __ :	
TEAM __ :	
TEAM __ :	

Selecting Team Leaders

Persons who serve as leaders for each Self-Assessment team are responsible for:

- Recruiting a diverse group of team members to engage in the assessment process
- Training members of the Self-Assessment team on the content of the regulations and the process they will use to assess the program
- Describing the program structure and layout to members, pointing out key locations they will visit, and introducing them to members of the staff and Head Start community who they may need to speak with
- Assisting team members in distributing the work load, assigning tasks that correspond to the skills and abilities of members, and pairing team members, as appropriate
- Establishing a time frame for completing the assignments
- Arranging to check in with members at certain intervals to assess their progress and assist with any problems that arise
- Providing on-going support to team members
- Assisting members in summarizing the data and information they have collected and drawing conclusions
- Synthesizing information into a Booklet Analysis that identifies program strengths and areas to strengthen
- Recognizing team members for their contributions to the program

Many programs choose leaders with experience and expertise in the service or management areas to which they are assigned. Other programs choose leaders from different content areas in order to enhance the objectivity of the process.

Team Leader Worksheet

Use the following **Team Leader Worksheet** to help you make decisions about what kinds of skills your team leaders should have and who would be the best candidate to assume a team leadership position.

Title	Skills/Perspectives	Team Leader (name, position)
Team 1:		
Team 2:		
Team 3:		
Team 4:		
Team 5:		

Recruiting Participants to Serve on your Self-Assessment Teams

Although the Self-Assessment process will be heavily supported by program staff, it provides a wonderful opportunity to involve others. The guidance attached to Regulation 1304.51(i)(1), program Self-Assessment and monitoring, reads: *"consider including staff, policy group members, parents, representatives from community organizations, governing body members, and staff from other Head Start agencies on the Self-Assessment team."* To the extent possible, it is desirable to recruit a team that is representative of the diversity of enrolled children, families and the local community.

Serving on a Self-Assessment team provides parents with an opportunity to learn important new skills that can be applied to their goals for personal or professional development. Including individuals from outside your program can offer a tremendous learning opportunity for both parties. You may want to contact peers from nearby Head Start programs and offer to assist with their assessment if they will assist with yours. Consider inviting early childhood development programs in the local area that would be willing to lend a hand. Affirmatively recruit team members who have the right skills and will contribute to the team. When recruiting, be sure your candidates have the time to engage in the process.

In selecting potential team members, take into consideration the different skills and qualities that the task requires. In addition to having an interest and / or expertise relating to Head Start services or systems, participants serving on the assessment team should have the following skills and qualities:

- Objectivity
- Professional conduct
- An appreciation for confidentiality
- One or more of the following:
    - ✓ Observation skills
    - ✓ Interview skills
    - ✓ Reading and documentation skills

Use the following **Team Participant Worksheet** to record your ideas for staff and volunteers who might serve on each of the Self-Assessment teams. We recommend that you list more persons than are actually needed, in the event that some volunteers have limited availability.

Team Participant Worksheet

List the positions, titles, or specific names (e.g., parent, board member, education content expert, Mary Jones, etc.) of staff and volunteers who you would like to recruit to serve on each of the Self-Assessment teams.

Team 1 — Title:		

Team 2 — Title:		

Team 3 — Title:		

Team 4 — Title:		

Team 5 — Title:		

Training Self-Assessment Teams

Team leaders should give careful thought to the training that they provide to team members so their team will be fully prepared to engage in the assessment process. The quality of the initial orientation and training as well as on-going support have a direct impact on the quality and usefulness of the results. Key elements of the training should include:

- Discussion of the purpose of Self-Assessment and how the results are an integral part of the planning process
- Overview of the program's organizational structure and description of program services and options
- Distribution of Head Start regulations and booklets relating to team assignments (duplicate the booklets as needed to provide everyone with a copy)
- Overview of regulations and discussion of their intent
- Review of the booklets and the three methods of collecting information: review, observe, and interview
- Distribution of written plans describing services in each of the content areas
- Review of important data sources that may be relevant to your work such as the *PRISM* Report, *PIR* data, Community Assessment, child outcome information, strategic plan, short and long term program goals, ongoing monitoring reports, and summaries of staff development plans
- Discussion of the qualities that make for a good team member (e.g. they are objective, honest, respectful of staff) and review of professional conduct expected of the team
- Sharing of the skills, expertise, and qualities of each member of the team

There are a number of different approaches to training staff and volunteers who serve on Self-Assessment teams. You may choose to:

- Keep all participants together for the entire training
- Provide an orientation to the full group followed by individual team training
- Conduct all training in individual teams

Use the following **Self-Assessment Training Worksheet** to assist you in designing the orientation and training session(s) for your Self-Assessment teams.

Self-Assessment Training Worksheet

Full Group	
Training Content	Trainer(s)

Individual Teams		
	Training Content	Trainer(s)
Team 1 — Title:		
Team 2 — Title:		
Team 3 — Title:		
Team 4 — Title:		
Team 5 — Title:		

Focusing Your Assessment

Many programs enroll large numbers of children and families and operate classrooms in more than one location. Your Self-Assessment leadership team may determine that including every classroom and every child's file in the Self-Assessment process will be too time-consuming. Decide if the Self-Assessment team will look at the entire program or focus their efforts on a representative sample.

A sample should be chosen which represents a cross-section of children, families, program options and services. Your sample should be large enough to establish whether quality is consistent throughout the program.

For grantees with delegate agencies and child care partnerships, it is important to make sure that these segments of your program are fully included in the Self-Assessment process. Determine if your Self-Assessment teams are responsible for assessing delegate programs and child care partners at this time, or if the delegate or partner will engage in an independent assessment.

Use the following **Focusing the Assessment Worksheet** to record your decisions.

Focusing the Assessment Worksheet

Select centers, classrooms, program options and records that will give you a full picture of the effectiveness of systems and services. Determine the approach you will take to assess partners and delegates. Record your decisions in the space provided.

Centers	
Classrooms	
Program Options	
Child and Family Records	
Child Care Partners	
Delegate Agencies	

Establishing a Timeline

Develop a timeline for teams to begin and end the process. Programs may wish to conduct Self-Assessment in phases. Others may choose to focus their efforts so that the Self-Assessment takes place over a number of weeks. Since Self-Assessment is an integral part of program planning, be sure to coordinate your Self-Assessment with your planning calendar. It is important that you adapt the process to best meet the needs of your particular program. Think about scheduling your own Self-Assessment at a time during the program year when:

- The Policy Council has enough experience to be full participants in the process
- Services are well underway
- Time remains before the end of the program year to correct any issues that arise, to maximize outcomes for children and families currently participating in the program
- The results can be used to support the development of the program's Training and Technical Assistance Plan and annual grant application

Many programs prefer to stagger their schedule so that the assessment of program services precedes the assessment of management systems. Teams assigned to assess Head Start management systems may benefit from the information gathered during the assessment of program services. They can use the information to draw conclusions about the relationship between systems and services and determine how systems are affecting services to children and families. Staggering the schedule also permits staff and volunteers to serve on more than one assessment team.

The following **Month-At-A-Glance Chart** shows, as an example, how the Self-Assessment might look in a program that chooses to complete Stage 2 of the process within one month.

Month-At-A-Glance			
1st Week	2nd Week	3rd Week	4th Week
▶ Self-Assessment Teams receive orientation and training	▶ Team conducts Self-Assessment	▶ Team conducts Self-Assessment ▶ Team Leaders check in with team's progress	▶ Team summarizes results

Use the following **Self-Assessment Timeline Worksheet** to set target dates for steps in the Self-Assessment process.

Self-Assessment Timeline Worksheet

	Activity	Date
Stage 1 **Preparing**	Recruit and convene the Self-Assessment leadership team	
	Convene the Self-Assessment leadership team to design the Self-Assessment process	
	Present process to Policy Council for consultation	
	Recruit participants to serve on Self-Assessment teams	
	Convene teams for orientation and training	
Stage 2 **Collecting and Synthesizing**	Draw on multiple data sources to complete service area booklets	
	Draw on multiple data sources to complete management system booklets	
	Summarize booklet information for Individual Team Member Summary	
	Consolidate information from individual team members into Team Leader Booklet Analysis	
Stage 3 **Interpreting**	Reconvene Self-Assessment leadership team to review and analyze results	
	Identify program strengths	
	Display information from the 18 Booklet Analyses in a useful manner	
	Establish patterns of identified needs	
	Reveal underlying causes and systemic issues	
	Classify and prioritize the identified weaknesses and areas to strengthen	
Stage 4 **Strengthening**	Develop a program improvement plan by identifying goals, desired outcomes, and specific action steps	
	Develop and implement a Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) Plan	
	Monitor and assess progress in implementing the Program Improvement Plan and T/TA Plan	

Including the Policy Council

Once you have completed the worksheets in Stage 1, present your completed package to the Policy Council for review. Ask members of your Self-Assessment leadership team who serve on the Policy Council to assist you in making the presentation.

Section 1304.51(i)(1) of the *Head Start Performance Standards* requires the consultation and participation of the Policy Council in the Self-Assessment process. Section 1304.50(d)(1)(viii) provides the following guidance:

> *As active participants in the ongoing process of annual Self-Assessment . . .*
> *the Policy Council and Policy Committee consider the extent to which:*
>
> - *The time schedule for Self-Assessment is reasonable*
> - *An appropriate assessment team has been formed, which includes parents and adequate representation from the community*
> - *The Self-Assessment team receives training on how to conduct an assessment*
> - *All team members are fully aware of the results of the last Self-Assessment, as well as of the Federal monitoring review*
> - *The measures used to conduct the Self-Assessment adequately evaluate the program*
> - *Findings from the Self-Assessment are reported to the Policy Council, Policy Committee, Parent Committees and governing bodies*
> - *Improvement Plans are appropriate and feasible in terms of resources and timeframes*

Stage 2: Collecting and Synthesizing the Information

Overview

Key participants in Stage 2 include:

Team leaders and the team members they have recruited to serve on the various Self-Assessment teams.

In this stage:

Team members engage in the collection of information and data to assess if the program is meeting the *Head Start Performance Standards*. Team members use the helpful tools provided in each booklet to collect information. Methods for gathering information include:

- Reviewing documents
- Interviewing people
- Observing activities
- Incorporating relevant data sources

Team members summarize their findings.

Team leaders begin the analysis process by consolidating and synthesizing the information they have collected.

Team leaders will produce a succinct and focused Booklet Analysis that identifies program strengths, specific weaknesses and areas to strengthen.

Program Self-Assessment Booklet 1

Management Systems: Program Governance

Core Question to be answered by Self-Assessment team:

How effective is your system of shared governance in supporting the implementation of quality services to children and families?

Purpose:

The objective is to ensure that programs have a policy group and governing body that share responsibility for overseeing the delivery of high quality services to children and families. Parents and community representatives should be empowered to actively participate in the shared decision-making process. (Introduction to 1304.50, p. 158, *Head Start Program Performance Standards*, hereafter referred to as "*Performance Standards*".)

This booklet will help the Self-Assessment team determine if the program meets Federal *Performance Standards* relating to Program Governance. Related *Performance Standards:* 1304.50, including Appendix A; 1304.52 (k).

As you conduct your Self-Assessment of program governance systems, pay close attention to the following:

- Do the governing body, the Policy Council and the staff have a formal structure of shared decision-making which supports the delivery of high quality services to children and families?
- Do the governing body, Policy Council, and program managers work in partnership to lead the Head Start program?
- Do program leaders (governing body, Policy Council, and program managers) embrace the spirit and intent of the Head Start regulations and help to ensure that parents have direct participation in program planning and operations?
- Do governing body members successfully carry out their fiduciary (legal and fiscal) responsibilities and ensure effective and appropriate expenditures of Head Start dollars?
- Is the Policy Council actively involved in informed decision making?

Helpful tools to support data collection in this area follow.

Observe:

The Self-Assessment team member(s) should sit in and observe a meeting of the Policy Council and the governing body. During your observations, look for evidence that members are engaged in informed decision-making and have the opportunity to review and discuss information prior to making a decision to approve or disapprove.

Review:

Ask the Head Start director and/or responsible manager to provide you with access to the following documents:

- Organizational chart
- Grant application
- Written policies or procedures that describe the Head Start program's system for program governance and shared decision-making
- Governing body and Policy Council by-laws
- Evidence of ongoing training for the governing body and Policy Council
- Agendas, minutes, handouts and materials from the governing body, Policy Council, Policy Committee and Parent Committee meetings
- Ongoing monitoring reports
- **Important data sources relevant to this area such as the *PRISM* report, *PIR* data, Community Assessment, strategic plan or short and long term program goals**

Use the checklist below to assist you in your document review:

Does the organizational chart accurately reflect all decision-making bodies?
❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Is there any documentation of ongoing training of governing body and Policy Council members (e.g. memos, invitations, sign-up sheets, training materials)? Does the training plan include orientation to the *Performance Standards* and support in carrying out roles and responsibilities in relation to the Head Start program?
❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Do governing body members receive training specific to their oversight responsibilities in financial and legal matters?
❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Do minutes and records from governing body and Policy Council meetings provide an accurate account of decisions and establish accountability?
❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Do the minutes reflect that the governing body and policy groups have the opportunity to review and discuss issues prior to approval?
❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Do agendas, minutes and records show evidence that the governing body and Policy Council review ongoing monitoring reports, including child outcome data and assessment information, to help determine the direction of program improvement efforts?
❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Is there documentation that shows that parent members of the Policy Council or Policy Committee are elected once a year?
❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Are all parents encouraged and given an opportunity to participate and serve as Policy Council members?
❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Are any parent members of the Policy Council or Policy Committee serving for more than three years? (Check old meeting minutes, membership lists, ask Policy Council members and staff.)
❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Is there a handbook or letter that explains Head Start parents' rights and responsibilities?

❏ Yes   ❏ No   Comment: _____

Are there written procedures approved by the governing body and Policy Council to help resolve community complaints about the program?

❏ Yes   ❏ No   Comment: _____

Are there written procedures to resolve disputes between the governing body and Policy Council?

❏ Yes   ❏ No   Comment: _____

Is there documentation that shows that community representatives of the Policy Council or Policy Committee are elected once a year?

❏ Yes   ❏ No   Comment: _____

Are any community representatives of the Policy Council or Policy Committee serving for more than three years? (Check old meeting minutes, membership lists, ask Policy Council members and staff.)

❏ Yes   ❏ No   Comment: _____

Is there evidence that the grant and budgets have been approved and signed by the Policy Council prior to submission to the regional office?

❏ Yes   ❏ No   Comment: _____

Interview:

A Self-Assessment team member should speak with at least two members of the governing body and Policy Council.

Questions for the governing body:

How would you describe the role you play in leading and supporting the Head Start program?

_____

_____

Can you describe for us some of the goals and issues facing the Head Start program at this time?

_____

_____

Relevant to your stewardship responsibilities, what types of Head Start financial reports do you routinely review? What is your understanding of the program's current financial situation? Is it on target, under budget, over budget?

_____

_____

Does the governing body engage in a self-evaluation process to determine their level of effectiveness and ways they can improve?

_____

_____

Is the governing body involved in the annual review and evaluation of the Head Start director? Can you describe that process?

_____

_____

Questions for the Policy Council:

How does the Policy Council participate in the hiring and termination process?

_____

_____

Describe the ways parents are involved at the parent committee level. How regularly do they meet? How are parents supported financially to carry out their activities (i.e., reimbursements)? Are all parents encouraged to participate?

_____

_____

If your program has both Head Start and Early Head Start, are both represented adequately and proportionately on the Policy Council?

_____

_____

Questions to ask members of the governing body and Policy Council:

Many programs have exceeded _Head Start Performance Standards_ by improving communication between the governing body and the Policy Council by appointing a liaison or providing for cross-membership within the governance structure. How does your program achieve two-way communication between the two groups?

_____

_____

Describe the ways in which the Policy Council receives information on how the program is progressing so that the Policy Council can make decisions that will be of benefit to the program.

_____

_____

What specific kinds of documents and reports do you receive to help inform you about the Head Start/Early Head Start program? (Listen for information about financial reports and child outcome data.)

_____

_____

Questions to ask members of the governing body and Policy Council:

Describe the training and support you have received from Head Start to assist you in your role.

_____

_____

Describe the governing body's (or Policy Council's) involvement in the Head Start grant application process.

_____

_____

Describe the annual Self-Assessment process. Who is involved in evaluating the program? How are the results reported to the governing body and the Policy Council? How are the results used to make improvements in the program?

_____

_____

Can you provide examples of how child outcome data has been used to plan for changes in the program?

_____

_____

How does the program recruit volunteers in the community?

_____

_____

Ask Policy Council and governing body members if the Policy Council and/or Policy Committee develop, review, approve/disapprove program policies and procedures. How do they accomplish this?

_____

_____

Incorporating Relevant Data Sources:

Additional observations, document reviews, or interview questions that this team may choose to add:

_____

_____

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_____

Include any key insights you may have learned from reviewing important data sources such as the *PRISM* report, *PIR* data, Community Assessment, strategic plan or short and long term program goals:

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Team Member Summary Worksheet

Summary of Results for Governance

Areas where the program is working well. Provide examples of program strengths or areas where the program exceeds *Performance Standards*:

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_____

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_____

Areas where the program needs improvement:

_____

_____

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_____

Additional areas of concern:

_____

_____

_____

_____

TEAM LEADER BOOKLET ANALYSIS

Booklet # _____

Booklet Name: _____

Program Strengths	Data Source

Specific Program Weaknesses and Areas to Strengthen	Data Source

Program Self-Assessment Booklet 2

Management Systems: Planning

Core Question to be answered by the Self-Assessment team:

How effective is the grantee's ongoing system of program planning in supporting the implementation of quality services to children and families?

Purpose:

Planning is a multi-faceted, dynamic, and ongoing activity that involves key members of the Head Start community. Agencies that plan well are better equipped to meet the unexpected and create a vision for the future.

This booklet will help you to assess if the program meets Federal *Performance Standards* relating to planning, which includes such activities as developing the Community Assessment, formulating program goals and objectives, selection of program options, and development of written plans for implementing services. Related *Performance Standards* include: 1304.51(a); 1305.3; 1306.30(a); 1306.30(d); 1306.31-1306.36; 1308.4.

As you conduct your assessment of the program's planning process, pay close attention to how the:

- Community Assessment is used for program planning
- Program consults with the governing body, policy groups, staff and other community organizations in the process
- Program develops and revisits long-range goals and short-term program and financial objectives
- Conclusions drawn from the Community Assessment affect program plans
- Results of the Self-Assessment impact plans for program improvement
- Program's analysis of outcomes for children affects the planning process

Helpful tools to support data collection in this area follow.

Review:

Ask the Head Start director and/or responsible manager to provide you with access to the following documents:

- Community Assessment
- Statement of long-range goals and short-term objectives
- Service plans for each program area (Early Childhood Development and Health Services, Family and Community Partnerships, and Program Design and Management)
- Timelines depicting the yearly planning calendar
- Results of the most recent Self-Assessment
- Results of the most recent child outcome data
- Ongoing monitoring reports
- Results of staff, parent, and community surveys
- **Important data sources relevant to this area such as the *PRISM* report and *PIR* data**

Use the checklist below to assist your document review:

Has the Community Assessment been completed within the last three years?

❏ Yes   ❏ No   Comment: _____

Has this document been updated within the last year?

❏ Yes   ❏ No   Comment: _____

Does the Community Assessment include some description of the community's strengths, needs, and resources?

❏ Yes   ❏ No   Comment: _____

Is there a strategic plan or other document that includes the program's long-term goals and short-term objectives?

❏ Yes   ❏ No   Comment: _____

Do long-range goals and short-term objectives logically follow from the Community Assessment?

❏ Yes   ❏ No   Comment: _____

Are they consistent with the philosophy of Head Start?

❏ Yes   ❏ No   Comment: _____

Is information from ongoing monitoring and Self-Assessments feeding into planning activities?

❏ Yes   ❏ No   Comment: _____

Interview:

The Self-Assessment team members should gather information about planning by
interviewing:

- Head Start director and program planner
- Members of the governing body and Policy Council

Questions to ask:

What process is used to develop the Community Assessment, and how do you utilize the
results? (i.e., Is the Community Assessment used for making plans, determining program
options, and deciding how and where services will be delivered?)

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What were some of the key findings from last year's Self-Assessment?

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_____

How did these findings impact your program improvement plans?

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What progress has been made in achieving goals from last year's Self-Assessment?

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Can you describe how your analysis of child outcome data has impacted program improvement planning?

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How would you describe your program planning process? Who is involved? What data sources and information do you use to determine what your goals and objectives should be?

_____

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_____

How are the governing body, policy groups, staff, and other community organizations consulted while plans are being made?

_____

_____

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_____

What process do you use to develop written plans? How are the plans utilized once they are written? (i.e., Do plans "sit on the shelf" or are they dynamic documents that are constantly referred to, reviewed, revised and updated as needed?)

_____

_____

_____

_____

What progress has your program made in achieving the goals and objectives contained in your strategic plan? What challenges have you faced? Have you revised any of your initial goals?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Answer if applicable to your program: If your Community Assessment indicates needs such as full day/full year or Early Head Start for children from birth to three, how does this influence the planning process?

_____

_____

_____

_____

In planning for parent involvement, does your program collect information about fathers in addition to mothers? (i.e., Do your intake forms prompt staff to include this information?)

_____

_____

_____

_____

To support transitions for young children and families, how does your Community Assessment collect information about continuity of services from pregnancy through age five?

_____

_____

_____

_____

In conducting your Community Assessment, how do you gather information on youth services to benefit siblings of Head Start children? Does your Community Assessment process include identifying marriage strengthening or marriage preparation services for couples who choose to participate?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Incorporating Relevant Data Sources:

Additional observations, document reviews, or interview questions that this team may choose to add:

_____

_____

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Include any key insights you may have learned from reviewing important data sources such as the *PRISM* report, *PIR* data, Community Assessment, strategic plan or short and long term program goals:

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Team Member Summary Worksheet

Summary of Results for Planning

Areas where the program is working well. Provide examples of program strengths or areas where the program exceeds *Performance Standards*:

_____

_____

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Areas where the program needs improvement:

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Additional areas of concern:

_____

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_____

TEAM LEADER BOOKLET ANALYSIS

Booklet # _____

Booklet Name: _____

Program Strengths	Data Source

Specific Program Weaknesses and Areas to Strengthen	Data Source

Program Self-Assessment Booklet 3

Management Systems: Communication

Core Question to be answered by the Self-Assessment team:

How effective is the grantee's communication system in supporting the implementation of quality services to children and families?

Purpose:

Communication ensures the exchange of information that allows individuals to become fully involved in program activities and to make group decisions that promote a quality program (Rationale for 1304.51(b), p.181).

This booklet will help you to assess if the program is meeting Federal *Performance Standards* relating to communications involving governing bodies, parents, policy groups, staff, partners in the community, and the community in general. Related *Performance Standards* include: 1304.22(a)(4); 1304.20(c)(1); 1304.22(b)(3); 1304.41(a)(1); 1304.51(b)-1304.51(f); 1308.4(l).

As you conduct your assessment of this program's communication system, pay close attention to how information is shared:

- Among staff, governing bodies, and policy groups
- Between staff and parents
- With community partners and child care partners
- With delegate agency governing bodies, Policy Committees, and staff (where appropriate)
- With the public and news media

Helpful tools to support data collection in this area follow.

Review:

Ask the Head Start director and/or responsible manager to provide you with access to the following documents:

- Policies and procedures pertaining to communication systems
- Written communication among staff
- Meeting minutes
- Sample communications with families
- Policies and procedures pertaining to communication
- Communications with the governing body and policy groups
- Ongoing monitoring reports
- Sample communications with community partners
- **Important data sources relevant to this area such as the *PRISM* report, *PIR* data, Community Assessment, strategic plan or short and long term program goals**

Use the checklist below to assist your document review:

Does the program have written policies and procedures pertaining to communication systems?

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Are communications with families provided in their primary language?

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Is an orientation packet provided to new members of governing bodies and policy groups which explains their role and participation in shared decision-making?

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Does the program have a way to communicate with staff such as memos, bulletins or electronic means such as e-mail or bulletin boards?

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Does the program have a regular schedule of meetings:

      For staff?   ❏ Yes   ❏ No

      For parents?   ❏ Yes   ❏ No

      For policy groups? ❏ Yes   ❏ No

Do governing body members and policy groups receive pertinent information in a timely manner in order to make informed decisions?

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Interview:

The Self-Assessment team member(s) may want to interview members of the Head Start management team, staff, members of the governing body or Policy Council, and Head Start families.

Questions to ask staff:

How do you find out what's happening in the program?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What opportunities do you have on a regular basis to communicate with other staff, including supervisors?

_____

_____

_____

_____

How do you foster effective two-way communication with families?

_____

_____

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_____

Are you able to communicate with families in their primary or preferred language?

_____

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_____

How does the program obtain information from each family in order to plan services for their child?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Does the program communicate with both parents when they live in separate households?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Questions for policy group and governing body members:

How are you oriented to your roles and responsibilities as a policy group or governing body member?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Is required information such as reports, federal policies, guidelines, program plans, policies and procedures and grant applications, shared with you? Is information received in a timely manner?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Questions for Managers:

Is there a system in place for staff to communicate regularly about services to children and families so that services become integrated and coordinated? Describe the system.

_____

_____

_____

_____

In what ways does the program seek information from families to plan opportunities within the program that meet their needs and desires?

_____

_____

_____

_____

How is good communication ensured between the program and its community partners?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Describe the system for orienting new employees.

_____

_____

_____

_____

What is the process for parent orientation to your program and services?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Questions for Families:

How do you find out about what's happening in the program?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Did you participate in an orientation to the program? Describe that experience.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Incorporating Relevant Data Sources:

Additional observations, document reviews, or interview questions that this team may choose to add:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Include any key insights you may have learned from reviewing important data sources such as the *PRISM* report, *PIR* data, Community Assessment, strategic plan or short and long term program goals:

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Team Member Summary Worksheet

Summary of Results for Communication

Areas where the program is working well. Provide examples of program strengths or areas where the program exceeds *Performance Standards*:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Areas where the program needs improvement:

_____

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Additional areas of concern:

_____

_____

_____

_____

TEAM LEADER BOOKLET ANALYSIS

Booklet # _____

Booklet Name: _____

Program Strengths	Data Source

Specific Program Weaknesses and Areas to Strengthen	Data Source

Program Self-Assessment Booklet 4

Management Systems: Record-Keeping and Reporting

Core Question to be answered by the Self-Assessment team:

How efficient and effective are the record-keeping and reporting systems in providing accurate, confidential, and timely information regarding children, families, and staff and in supporting quality services?

Purpose:

Effective record-keeping and reporting systems provide the information needed to individualize programs for children and families, to monitor the quality of program services, to assist in program planning and management, and to ensure the delivery of quality services (Rationale for 1304.51(g), p. 184).

This booklet will help you to assess if the program meets Federal *Performance Standards* relating to maintaining publicly accessible records, records on refusals of health services, records relating to the dispensing of medication, etc. *Performance Standards*: 1301.30; 1304.20(e)(5); 1304.22(c)(3)-1304.22(c)(5); 1304.51(g)-1304.51(h); 1304.52(k)(3)(i); 1308.4(l); 1308.6(e)(4).

> Note: At least one staff person should sit on this review team so they can access and review child/family files. Other team members may not have access to these files based on the program's confidentiality policy.

As you conduct your assessment of the program's record-keeping and reporting systems, pay close attention to:

- The way that child/family files are maintained and the contents of each file
- The reports that are used by program managers to maintain program accountability and keep them advised of the program's progress in delivering services to children and families
- The reports that are generated on child outcomes for children three to five years old that provide information on progress on the required domains, elements, and indicators when they enter the program, at a mid-point in the year, and at the end of the year

The Child/Family Audit Checklist has been included in this booklet as an optional instrument. Team members may find it to be a helpful tool in assessing the effectiveness of the program's record-keeping and reporting systems

Other helpful tools to support data collection in this area follow.

Review:

Ask the Head Start director and/or responsible manager to provide you with access to the following documents:

- Program policies and procedures pertaining to confidentiality

- A sample number of child/family records to review. Team members may choose to use the attached Child/Family Audit Checklist, modify it to meet the individual needs of your program, or develop your own data collection tool to record the results of record reviews (In order to comply with policies pertaining to the confidentiality of records, these files should be reviewed by staff participating on the assessment team.)

- A selection of reports used by supervisors and managers to determine the status of program operations and services (e.g., ongoing monitoring reports, weekly activity reports, computerized tracking reports, and child outcome reports)

- The program's most recent *Program Information Report (PIR)*

- **Important data sources relevant to this area such as the *PRISM* report, Community Assessment, strategic plan or short and long term program goals**

Parents serving on this team may choose to review their own child and family file and compare the format and contents with Head Start regulations pertaining to record-keeping.

File Audit (Child/Family Files):

After completing your audit, summarize the strengths and identify any patterns that emerge that point to weaknesses in the system.

Summary comments:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Interview and questionnaire:

Ask your team leader to identify who within the organization is in charge of maintaining child/family records. Interview that individual and ask the following:

Describe the system you use to maintain records for children and families.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Who has access to child/family records?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Describe the safeguards in place to keep information on families and children confidential.

_____

_____

_____

_____

What procedures do you follow when a parent asks to see his/her child's file?

_____

_____

_____

_____

With the assistance of the person(s) in charge of maintaining child/family records, complete the following questionnaire:

Are standardized forms used for record-keeping throughout the program?

❏ Yes   ❏ No

Comment: _____

_____

_____

Are there documents that record when parents refuse permission for health services for their children?

❏ Yes   ❏ No

Comment: _____

_____

_____

Are there physician instructions and written parent authorizations for all medications administered by staff ?

❏ Yes   ❏ No

Comment: _____

_____

_____

When medication is given to the child, is the amount, time, date and person giving it recorded?

❏ Yes   ❏ No

Comment: _____

_____

_____

Do files on enrolled children indicate that follow-up occurred when health needs were identified? Were parents contacted? If necessary, was assistance provided with transportation or payment for medication?

❏ Yes   ❏ No

Comment: _____

_____

_____

Is there a method for staff to report observations of child abuse and neglect in accordance with local laws?

❏ Yes   ❏ No

Comment: _____

_____

_____

Do you seek parents' permission to transfer file information when a child leaves Head Start?

❏ Yes   ❏ No

Comment: _____

_____

_____

Reporting Systems:

Interview:

Interview members of the program management team and ask:

What kinds of data are collected and what kinds of reports are generated to inform you about program operations?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What procedures are in place for producing and disseminating status reports, including those related to child outcomes?

_____

_____

_____

_____

How do you use these reports to manage the program? Are reports shared with other managers and the program director?

_____

_____

_____

_____

To what extent is your program engaged in using automated information systems?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Do you seek parents' permission to transfer file information when a child moves from Early Head Start to Head Start?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Interview the Head Start director and ask:

Are there record-keeping and reporting systems that help decision-makers track the program's progress in achieving goals and objectives?

_____

_____

_____

_____

When you determine that services need to change to better meet the needs of children and families, are these changes reflected in your written plans? What is the process you use to make this happen?

_____

_____

_____

_____

How is information regarding this Head Start program made available to the public?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Specific questions for the program director about the Head Start *Program Information Report (PIR)*:

How is the information needed for the *PIR* collected across the program?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Is the information analyzed for accuracy and correctness in any way? For example, is the information compared to the same data contained in other management information reports for the same time period to see if it is in agreement?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Is the information in the *PIR* used by managers and staff to identify possible performance problems and make improvements? Give examples. Is the information integrated with the program's annual planning process?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Incorporating Relevant Data Sources:

Additional observations, document reviews, or interview questions that this team may choose to add:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Include any key insights you may have learned from reviewing important data sources such as the *PRISM* report, *PIR* data, Community Assessment, strategic plan or short and long term program goals:

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CHILD/FAMILY FILE AUDIT

Instructions:

For each file you review, place the child's name and identifying information in the space provided across the top of the instrument. Review each file and mark (X) if you find verification of the Head Start requirement within the file. Mark (0) if no evidence is found.

Before starting, ask a staff member to show you how the files are organized and where each piece of information is typically located.

While conducting your audit, note patterns that emerge which point to a potential weakness in the program's overall record-keeping system, such as lack of documentation, incorrect documentation by new staff, etc. Include the information in your summary.

CHILD/FAMILY FILE AUDIT
Duplicate this form as needed.

Child's name or identifying information

Information/Service																		Total
Income verification signed by staff																		
Meets income eligibility? (yes/no)																		
Meets age eligibility?																		
Enrollment forms																		
Income verification (not required for 2nd year enrollees)																		
Regular interaction with families (some in the home)																		
Pre-existing family plans																		
Family Partnership Agreement (FPA)																		

CHILD/FAMILY FILE AUDIT

Child's name or identifying information

Information/Service																		Total
Referrals to community resources? (yes/no)																		
Follow-up on referrals (yes/no)																		
Individual child developmental screening																		
Individual child developmental assessment (at 3 points during year)																		
Center-based: # education staff home visits																		
Center-based: #staff/parent conferences (2 required)																		
Home-based: # home-based visits																		

CHILD/FAMILY FILE AUDIT CHECKLIST

Child's name or identifying information

Information/Service																		Total
Emergency contact information																		
Child's medical, dental and developmental history																		
Medical home established within 90 days																		
HEALTH SCREENINGS:																		
Growth assessment																		
Immunization status																		
Vision																		
Hearing																		
Other EPSDT screenings: (individual programs complete)																		

CHILD/FAMILY FILE AUDIT CHECKLIST

Child's name or identifying information

Total

Information/Service																				
Developmental/sen-sory screening completed within 45 days?																				
SIGNED MEDICAL EXAM																				
Medical treatment needed? (yes/no)																				
Treatment completed, if needed																				
COMPLETED DENTAL EXAM																				
Dental treatment needed? (yes/no)																				
Treatment completed, if needed																				

For HS 3 to 5 yr. olds only

CHILD/FAMILY FILE AUDIT

Child's name or identifying information

Information/Service																				Total
Documentation of well-baby visits																				
Medical treatment needed?																				
Treatment completed																				
Forwarding of records at end of HS/EHS																				
IEPs (HS children w/ disabilities only)																				
IFSP (EHS children w/ disabilities only)																				

For EHS only

Team Member Summary Worksheet

Summary of Results for Record-Keeping and Reporting

Areas where the program is working well. Provide examples of program strengths or areas where the program exceeds *Performance Standards*:

_____

_____

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Areas where the program needs improvement:

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Additional areas of concern:

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TEAM LEADER BOOKLET ANALYSIS

Booklet # _____

Booklet Name: _____

Program Strengths	Data Source

Specific Program Weaknesses and Areas to Strengthen	Data Source

Program Self-Assessment Booklet 5

Management Systems: Ongoing Monitoring

Core Question to guide the Self-Assessment team:

How effective is the grantee's ongoing monitoring system in supporting the implementation of quality services to children and families?

Purpose:

Ongoing Monitoring helps to ensure that Federal regulations and local goals and objectives are being achieved, and to ensure that appropriate interventions are being taken in a timely manner (Rationale to 1304.51(i)(2), p. 188).

This booklet will help the team assess if the program meets Federal *Performance Standards* relating to monitoring program operations and those of delegate agencies (if applicable). Related *Performance Standards* include: 1304.51(i)(2)-1304.51(i)(3); 1308.4(d); Part 74.51; Part 92.40

As you conduct your assessment of the program's ongoing monitoring systems, look for evidence that managers:

- Analyze Early Head Start and Head Start data and information contained in tracking systems and written reports
- Engage in on-site observation and supervision of Early Head Start and Head Start staff
- Have a system in place for tracking family and community partnerships
- Have a system in place for tracking patterns of progress and accomplishments for groups of three to five year old children in the eight domains of learning in addition to health and disabilities services. The eight domains of learning and development for three to five year old children are:
  - ✓ Language Development
  - ✓ Literacy
  - ✓ Mathematics
  - ✓ Science
  - ✓ Creative Arts
  - ✓ Social & Emotional Development
  - ✓ Approaches Toward Learning
  - ✓ Physical Health and Development
- Use information from reports, observations, etc. to take corrective action and make program changes

Helpful tools to support data collection in this area follow.

Review:

Ask the Head Start director and/or responsible manager to provide you with access to the following documents:

- Program policies and procedures relating to ongoing monitoring
- Sample tracking reports
- Ongoing monitoring reports
- Written documentation of periodic monitoring activities, including reports to any delegate agencies
- **Important data sources relevant to this area such as the *PRISM* report, *PIR* data, Community Assessment, strategic plan or short and long term program goals**

Use the checklist below to assist your document review:

Are there tracking/reporting systems in place and regular monitoring activities occurring in each of the following service areas? Identify who is receiving such reports and describe how they are being used.

	EHS		HS		
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Describe
Child Development					
Health					
Mental Health					
Disabilities					
Nutrition					
Family Partnerships					
Transition					
Community Partnerships					
Parent Involvement					

Interview:

Interview program management staff and ask them to describe their system for ensuring that program operations are being implemented properly and according to plan. Questions may include:

In what ways are staff supervised and observed on-site to assure that services are delivered with consistent quality?

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_____

How are services to children with disabilities tracked and monitored?

_____

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_____

How do you use program tracking reports and other reports?

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How does the program check on the quality and completeness of ongoing child assessment data?

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Can you share an example of how your analysis of child outcome information for three-to-five year old children has resulted in program change?

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For programs with child care partnerships:

What is your system for monitoring partnership classrooms to assure quality services are implemented? What have your recent monitoring efforts revealed?

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For programs with delegate agencies:

What is your system for monitoring your delegate agencies to assure quality services are implemented? What have your recent monitoring efforts revealed?

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Incorporating Relevant Data Sources:

Additional observations, document reviews, or interview questions that this team may choose to add:

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Include any key insights you may have learned from reviewing important data sources such as the *PRISM* report, *PIR* data, Community Assessment, strategic plan or short and long term program goals:

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Team Member Summary Worksheet

Summary of Results for Ongoing Monitoring

Areas where the program is working well. Provide examples of program strengths or areas where the program exceeds *Performance Standards*:

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Areas where the program needs improvement:

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Additional areas of concern:

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TEAM LEADER BOOKLET ANALYSIS

Booklet # _____

Booklet Name: _____

Program Strengths	Data Source

Specific Program Weaknesses and Areas to Strengthen	Data Source

Program Self-Assessment Booklet 6

Management Systems: Human Resources

Core Question to be answered by the Self-Assessment team:

How effective is the grantee's human resources management system in supporting the implementation of quality services to children and families?

Purpose:

The objective is to ensure that programs recruit and select dynamic, qualified staff who possess the knowledge, skills and experience needed to provide high quality, comprehensive and culturally sensitive services to children and families in the program. Staff should be regarded as one of the program's greatest assets.

This booklet will help you to assess if the program meets Federal *Performance Standards* relating to personnel, staff qualifications, hiring, performance appraisals, etc. *Performance Standards*: 1301.31, including Appendix A; 1304.24(a)(2)-1304.24(a)(3); 1304.52; 1306.20-1306.23; 1308.4(e); 1308.4(k); 1310.16-1310.17.

As you conduct your assessment of human resources management, pay close attention to:

- How staff are organized to support the program
- How staff are oriented to their positions and supervised
- The program's system to support training and professional development, especially in the area of teacher qualifications

Helpful tools to support data collection in this area follow.

Review:

Ask the Head Start director and/or responsible manager to provide you with access to the following documents:

- Organizational chart of staff or list of staff and their functions
- Program personnel policies
- Professional development/training plans for staff (individual and agency-wide)
- Child abuse reporting policy
- Sample of staff files from all areas of the organization plus sample performance appraisals (to maintain confidentiality, personnel files should be reviewed by a manager or staff member who has access to these files)
- Ongoing monitoring reports
- **Important data sources relevant to this area such as the *PRISM* report, *PIR* data, Community Assessment, strategic plan or short and long term program goals**

Use the checklist below to assist your document review:

Are there job descriptions of each staff position, including qualifications and roles and responsibilities?

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Are there formal procedures for the recruitment, selection and termination of staff?

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Are references verified and background checks conducted in accordance with state law and administrative requirements before hiring job applicants?

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Does the program have in place standards of conduct by which all employees must abide?

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Is there evidence that regular volunteers are asked and required to have tuberculosis testing?

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Are there procedures for conducting staff performance appraisals? Is there evidence that procedures are being followed? Are appraisals conducted at least once each year?

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Is there an assurance that the program is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, religion or disability?

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Are there procedures for managing employee grievances and adverse actions?

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Checklist for reviewing personnel files:

Content Area Expert Qualifications:

Is there evidence that lead teachers have proper qualifications?

Classroom (lead) teacher qualifications:
50% of teachers have Associate, Baccalaureate, or advanced degree in early childhood education or Associate, Baccalaureate, or advanced degree in a field related to early childhood education, with experience in teaching preschool children.

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Or

Child Development Associate (CDA) state certificate for preschool teachers or degree in a field related to early childhood education, with experience in teaching preschool children and a state certificate to teach preschool.

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Or

If the teacher does not have the above qualification, enrollment in a 2 or 4-year degree or CDA program that will grant degree or credential to the individual within 180 days of employment.

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Note: For programs that use consultants to provide content area expertise, consultants must also meet qualifications outlined in Performance Standards.

Are health services supported by a content area expert with experience and training in public health, nursing, health education, maternal and child health, or health administration?

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Are nutrition services supported by a content area expert who is a registered or licensed dietitian or nutritionist?

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Are mental health services supported by a content area expert who is a licensed or certified mental health professional with experience and expertise in serving young children and their families?

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Are family and community partnership services supported by a content area expert who has training or experience in fields related to social, human or family services?

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Are parent involvement services supported by a content area expert who has training, experience and skills in assisting the parents of young children in advocating and decision-making for their families?

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Are disability services supported by a content area expert who has training or experience in securing and individualizing needed services for children with disabilities?

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Do home visitor staff have knowledge and experience in child development and early childhood education, the principles of child health, safety, and nutrition, adult learning principles and family dynamics? Are they skilled in communicating with and motivating people? Do they have knowledge of community resources and the skills to link families with appropriate agencies and services?

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Do transportation services staff have the proper qualifications (including licenses)?

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Do transportation services staff receive ongoing training to increase knowledge and skills?

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Do Early Head Start staff have training and experience necessary to develop supportive relationships with very young children and their families?

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Are professional development plans created and implemented?

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Is there evidence that employees are in good health and have been screened for tuberculosis?

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Does the program's child abuse policy comply with state law?

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Interview:

Interview the Head Start director, managers and staff from all segments of your organization (e.g., food service, transportation, etc.).

Guiding questions:

Tell me about how you learn what is expected of you in your position and the kinds of support you get to help you do a better job.

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How did you learn about the Head Start philosophy and _Performance Standards_?

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Describe your agency's plan and ongoing efforts to support continuing education for teachers in need of early childhood degrees.

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Who has the responsibility for the following tasks associated with child outcomes and how were these staff persons trained?

- Summarizing child assessment information

- Analyzing and interpreting results

- Planning

- Data collection and tracking

_____

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_____

Describe the performance appraisal process. How often does it occur?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Are you provided opportunities for professional development? Do any of these opportunities afford course credit or lead to higher degrees?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Are you aware of the program's policies regarding the reporting of child abuse and neglect? Can you briefly describe the process?

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For programs with child care partnerships:

What is your system for monitoring partnership classrooms to assure quality services are implemented? What have your recent monitoring efforts revealed?

_____

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_____

For programs with delegate agencies:

What is your system for monitoring your delegate agencies to assure quality services are implemented? What have your recent monitoring efforts revealed?

_____

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Incorporating Relevant Data Sources:

Additional observations, document reviews, or interview questions that this team may choose to add:

_____

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Include any key insights you may have learned from reviewing important data sources such as the *PRISM* report, *PIR* data, Community Assessment, strategic plan or short and long term program goals:

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Team Member Summary Worksheet

Summary of Results for Human Resources

Areas where the program is working well. Provide examples of program strengths or areas where the program exceeds *Performance Standards*:

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Areas where the program needs improvement:

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Additional areas of concern:

_____

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TEAM LEADER BOOKLET ANALYSIS

Booklet # _____

Booklet Name: _____

Program Strengths	Data Source

Specific Program Weaknesses and Areas to Strengthen	Data Source

Program Self-Assessment Booklet 7

Management Systems: Fiscal Management

Core Question to be answered by the Self-Assessment team:

How effective is the fiscal management system in supporting the implementation of quality services to children and families?

Purpose:

Fiscal Management means having a system of administering resources including funds, property and equipment. A fiscal management system is necessary to ensure that limited resources, allocated carefully and accountably, support the program's delivery of quality services.

This booklet will help you to assess if the program meets Federal *Performance Standards* relating to fiscal management, budgeting, and expenditures. Related *Performance Standards* include: 1301.10-1301.13, Subpart B; 1301.20-1301.21, Subpart C; 1301.32-1301.33; 1304.20(c)(5); 1304.23(b)(1)(i); 1304.50(f); 1304.50(g)(2); 1304.51(h)(1)-1304.51(h)(2); 1304.52(d)(8); 1305.9; 1308.4(m)-1308.4(o); 1310.23(b); Part 74, Subpart C; Part 92, Subpart C; OMB Circular A-21; OMB Circular A-87; OMB Circular A-110; OMB Circular A-122; OMB Circular A-133.

As you conduct your assessment of the program's fiscal management systems, pay close attention to:

- How Federal regulations regarding fiscal management are met
- How the budget is developed and approved
- How expenditures are monitored
- What fiscal reports are produced and how they are used
- How the grantee maintains accountability
- How investment choices are made

Given the increased emphasis on fiscal management and oversight, the official *PRISM* Fiscal Checklist has been included in this booklet. It will provide you with a useful tool to ensure that the program is meeting its fiscal oversight and management responsibilities.

Helpful tools to support data collection in this area follow.

Interview:

The Self-Assessment team member should interview the program's fiscal officer and Head Start director. Use the questions below to assist you with the interview:

Describe the fiscal system and how the management team and the fiscal officers work together to support the delivery of Head Start services. How do they interact during the year to support the Head Start program?

_____

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_____

How is the budget developed and approved? Describe the involvement of the governing body and Policy Council. Are there written procedures describing this process? Is there a timeline?

_____

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_____

How are expenditures monitored? What reports are produced and how are they used? (Find out who receives regular financial reports, how often, and how the budget is compared to actual expenditures.)

_____

_____

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_____

Has the program conducted a cost analysis of providing transportation services? If so, does your cost analysis reflect the true cost of providing transportation services? Do the results suggest any changes to these services?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Review:

Review salary information for the grantee's executive and staff positions. Are salaries in general and teacher salaries in particular, sufficient to recruit and retain qualified staff? Is the level of compensation consistent with the mission and goals of an anti-poverty agency and reasonable by community standards?

_____

_____

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_____

Use your interview with the director and chief financial officer to obtain copies of documents and other information to complete the attached fiscal checklist.

Incorporating Relevant Data Sources:

Additional observations, document reviews, or interview questions that this team may choose to add:

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Include any key insights you may have learned from reviewing important data sources such as the *PRISM* report, *PIR* data, Community Assessment, strategic plan or short and long term program goals:

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Fiscal Checklist

Instructions for completing the Fiscal Checklist:

This checklist is designed to assist you in monitoring the fiscal health of the grantee and any delegate agencies (as applicable). The checklist is divided into three sections (with all questions receiving either a "Yes" or "No" answer). The answers to the questions in the first two sections will help you, in the third section, assess fiscal health in each of two major areas:

1. **Internal Controls [45 CFR Parts 74.21(b)(3), 92.20(b)(3)]; and**

2. **Governance [45 CFR Part 1304.50(g)(2)].**

These two major areas receive substantial emphasis because, together, effective internal controls and governance help grantees ensure successful and efficient operations of their own programs (and those of their delegates), reliable financial reporting, and compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

The first section of this checklist (Section I) includes 24 questions that serve as indicators (i.e., "flags") designed to help identify underlying fiscal problems. Circle "Y" (yes) or "N" (no) when answering each question. Responses with flags immediately below them might indicate an underlying fiscal problem. (For several of the questions, one or more follow-up questions appear that are related to the main question. Answer these questions as directed.) After completing the first section, refer back to the questions with "flag" responses to gain a preliminary sense of the fiscal health of the grantee (and/or its delegates) and to identify areas that may need additional attention.

The second section of this checklist (Section II) includes 28 questions that directly assess compliance with specific program requirements (i.e., each question contains citations to the regulation(s) and/or Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circulars that are applicable to the respective question). Circle "Y" (yes) or "N" (no) when answering each question. (For several of the questions, one or more follow-up questions appear that are related to the main question. Answer these questions as directed.) If a flag appears under the response that you circled, and if the weight of the answers to the main and follow-up questions (if applicable) suggest the grantee/delegate is not in compliance with the specified requirement(s), place a check in the box under the "Potential Area of Noncompliance" heading.

Toward the end of the fiscal review (i.e., after you have completed Sections I and II of the checklist, gathered all relevant information from document reviews and interviews, and followed up on all outstanding issues), turn your attention to the two major areas identified above (i.e., internal controls and governance). These items also appear in question form in Section III (page 20). For each of these items on page 20, place a check in the box under the heading "Potential Area of Noncompliance" if the weight of the evidence you have collected (including the answers to the questions in Sections I and II of the checklist) suggests that the grantee/delegate is not in compliance with the specified requirement.

Under the "Documents Reviewed" column, list the evidence, in the form of documents, you gathered and reviewed to support your conclusion. Under the "People Interviewed" column, list the individuals you interviewed when answering the checklist questions, and in the "Additional Comments" column, write any additional remarks that pertain to the question.

In answering the questions on this checklist, some of the documents you might find useful to review include:

- current and prior financial statements from the audit report,
- most recent financial reports as delivered to the governing bodies,
- Policies and Procedures manual(s) covering fiscal operations (e.g., written accounting procedures and procurement procedures),
- detailed general ledger or accounts payable (AP) disbursements journal,
- monthly trial balances,
- bank reconciliations,
- administrative costs documentation,
- program budget planning documents (e.g., forms, memorandums, work papers, GABI, and grant proposals),
- chart of accounts,
- property inventory and files for recent major purchases,
- audit reports and the management letter that accompanies the audit report (including the most recent),
- current and prior year Financial Assistance Award (FAA),
- notice of grant award,
- indirect cost agreement and/or cost allocation plan,
- lease agreements,
- codes of conduct from personnel policies,
- organizational chart or list of staff and function of each staff person, including any vacancies,
- payroll journal and/or payroll service summary,
- most recent SF-269, with supporting documentation
- PMS-272 with supporting documentation from the past four quarters,
- insurance policies (e.g., liability, vehicles, child accident),
- interagency agreements,
- Non-Federal share documentation,
- Department of Agriculture (USDA) accounting records and source documents (e.g. meal counts, etc.),
- Vendor contracts,
- grantee charter document,
- delegate agencies and other partnership contracts as required.

Please note that questions 12, 27, 40, and 50 apply to grantees only, and question 45 is only applicable to private non-profits.

Fiscal Checklist

Section I		Documents Reviewed	People Interviewed	Additional Comments
1	Y N	Is the ratio of current assets to current liabilities less than 1 (i.e., are there insufficient funds to pay debts due within a year)? [If yes, please answer the question below. If no, go to question 2.] Y N Has the ratio decreased over the past three years?		
2	Y N	Has the grantee borrowed money within the last 12 months?		
3	Y N	Has the amount of cash reported on the balance sheet (per audit report) decreased over the past three years?		
4	Y N	Have vendor payments been late?		
5	Y N	Does the most recent audit contain a disclosure (footnote) regarding cash flow status?		

			Documents Reviewed	People Interviewed	Additional Comments
6	Y ☐ N	Does the most recent audit show any programs with negative operating balances?			
7	Y ☐ N	Are there large unfunded liabilities (e.g., annual and sick leave accruals, taxes payable, 401(k) payments outstanding; large mortgage or large line-of-credit payments) or recent significant cost increases?			
8	Y N ☐	Have the grantee and/or delegates provided adequate documentation to demonstrate timely payment of employee benefits (i.e., Federal and state taxes, health and retirement contributions)?			
9	Y ☐ N	Are the grantee and/or delegate named in pending or recent litigation? Are there pending or current disallowances from any funding source such as USDA, CSBG, or child care? [Obtain this information through interviews with staff.]			
10	Y ☐ N	Is there any indication the agency may lose one or more major programs and/or funding sources?			

		Documents Reviewed	People Interviewed	Additional Comments
11	Does the Federal tax information reported agree with other financial reports? (Specifically, is the tax information on the IRS 990 in agreement with the audit report?) Y N			
12	[THIS QUESTION APPLIES TO THE GRANTEE ONLY] Does the final SF-269 reconcile with the appropriate quarterly PMS-272 for the same period? Y N			
13	Do bank statements reflect any negative cash balances, overdraft, or finance charges? Y N			
14	Has there been a recent reduction of program staff or services, a shift towards outsourcing, excessive turnover of supervisory staff, or have key personnel quit unexpectedly? Y N			
15	Does the agency maintain a complete and up-to-date list of all employees? Y N			
16	Are separation/termination of employment instances immediately reported to the payroll department? Y N			

		Documents Reviewed	People Interviewed	Additional Comments
17	Y N ⌐	Have positions been vacant for a significant period of time (i.e., more than 90 days)?		
18	Y N ⌐	Are original time records properly prepared and properly approved by supervisors?		
19	Y N ⌐	Are payroll records regularly compared with the records of the personnel department?		
20	Y N ⌐	Are there written accounting procedures?		
21	Y N ⌐	Are there specific procedures for maintaining checks and balances for cash management and other fiscal functions? [To assist in answering this question, consider the questions below.] Y N Are cash and negotiable securities under lock and key, and is access to them strictly controlled?		

		Documents Reviewed	People Interviewed	Additional Comments
Y N	Are forms such as blank checks and purchase orders sequentially pre-numbered, physically secured, and is access to them strictly controlled?			
Y N	Are mechanical check signers and signature plates physically protected, and is access to them strictly controlled?			
Y N	Is one individual allowed to control all key aspects of a transaction or event?			
Y N	Are duties assigned systematically to a number of individuals to ensure that effective checks and balances exist?			
Y N	Does the grantee have internal controls for mail processing, cash receipts, and cash disbursements?			
Y N	Are all grantee bank statements reconciled on a monthly basis?			

	Documents Reviewed	People Interviewed	Additional Comments
Y N Are there safeguards in place for financial data systems in the event of data failure?			
Y N Are changes in payroll properly authorized?			
22 Y☐ N Are there compliance findings over internal controls in the current audit? [If yes, please answer the question below. If no, go to question 23.]			
Y N Have the findings been corrected or is there a corrective action plan in place?			
23 Y☐ N Did a review of year-end payments disclose any unusual or irregular items (e.g., large purchases of supplies or equipment or pay out of end-of-year "bonuses")?			
24 Y N☐ Do the grantee and/or delegate agencies have policies and procedures for the use of credit cards (e.g., require documentation for expenditures, regularly monitor expenditures, and impose other clear spending limits)?			

Section II

		Potential Area of Noncompliance (✓)	Documents Reviewed	People Interviewed	Additional Comments
25	Have Head Start funds been drawn down in excess of documented cash requirements? [45 CFR Parts 74.22(b)(2), 92.21(c)] Y ☐ N	☐			
26	Have prior year salaries or other prior year costs been charged to the current budget year? [45 CFR Parts 74.28, 92.23(a)] Y ☐ N	☐			
27	[THIS QUESTION APPLIES TO THE GRANTEE ONLY] Has the grantee submitted timely and accurate SF-269s and PMS-272s? [45 CFR Parts 1304.51(h)(2), 74.52(a)(1)&(2), 92.41(b)&(c)] Y N ☐	☐			
28	Have Head Start funds been used to cover costs normally paid by other funding streams (i.e., interfund borrowing)? [45 CFR Parts 74.27(a), 92.22(a)(1)&(2), 92.22(b)] Y ☐ N	☐			
29	Does the grantee have a qualified fiscal officer? [45 CFR Part 1304.52(d)(8)] Y N ☐	☐			

		Potential Area of Noncompliance (✔)	Documents Reviewed	People Interviewed	Additional Comments
30 Y ⌐ N	Are any staff making in excess of $100,000? [Consider gross pay from all funding sources.]	☐			
31 Y N ⌐	Are the wages of staff (including those identified in question 30 above) reasonable and supported by appropriate wage comparability data? [OMB Circulars A-122 (Attachment B, Item 8 (c)), A-87 (Attachment B, Item 8 (b))	☐			
32 Y N ⌐	Did the grantee award COLA/Quality funds in compliance with the terms of its grant application? [45 CFR Parts 74.21(b)(3), 92.20(b)(3)]	☐			
33 Y N ⌐	Are there appropriate internal controls for payroll checks distributed to employees? [45 CFR Parts 74.21(b)(3), 92.20(b)(3)&(6)]	☐			
34 Y N ⌐	If the grantee has shared costs, has the grantee used an allocation base that best measures the relative degree of benefit for all benefiting functions? [45 CFR Part 92.20(b)(5), OMB Circulars A-122 (Attachment A, subsection D.1b), A-87 (Attachment A, subsection C.3), and A-21 (Section C, subpart 4)]	☐			

#	Y/N		Potential Area of Noncompliance (✓)	Documents Reviewed	People Interviewed	Additional Comments
35	Y N	Does the grantee regularly compare budgeted costs to actual costs? [45 CFR Parts 74.21(b)(4), 92.20(b)(4)]	☐			
36	Y N	Do the Policy Council and Policy Committees work in partnership with key management staff and the governing body to develop, review, and approve or disapprove all procedures for refunding applications and amendments to refunding applications for Early Head Start and Head Start, including administrative services, prior to the submission of such applications? [45 CFR Part 1304.50(d)(1)(i)]	☐			
37	Y N	Are financial reports current and available upon request? [45 CFR Parts 1304.51(h)(1)&(2), 74.21(b)(1)&(2), 74.53(b), 92.20(b)(1)&(2)]	☐			
38	Y N	Have the grantee and delegate agencies failed to submit timely and accurate IRS 941, IRS 990 and other official reports as required? [45 CFR Part 1304.51(h)(2)]	☐			

	Potential Area of Noncompliance (✓)	Documents Reviewed	People Interviewed	Additional Comments
39 Y☞ N Has there been a failure to disseminate timely and accurate fiscal information to the management staff, governing body, and policy groups? [45 CFR Parts 1304.51(d)(3), 1304.51(h)(1)]	☐			
40 Y N☞ [THIS QUESTION APPLIES TO THE GRANTEE ONLY] Has the grantee implemented procedures for programmatic and fiscal monitoring of its own operations and each of its delegates? [45 CFR Part 1304.51(i)(2)]	☐			
41 Y☞ N Have the grantee and/or delegate agencies made changes to the budget that required prior approval before receiving such approval in writing? [45 CFR Parts 74.25, 92.30] [Select subsection(s) of 45 CFR Parts 74.25 and/or 92.30 that are appropriate to the circumstance.]	☐			
42 Y☞ N Was the last required annual audit not completed and/or not submitted timely and/or unavailable? [OMB Circular A-133 (Subpart B.220), 45 CFR Parts 1301.12(a), 74.53(b), 92.42]	☐			

#	Y/N	Question	Potential Area of Noncompliance (✓)	Documents Reviewed	People Interviewed	Additional Comments
43	Y / N	Has the grantee corrected previous audit findings? [OMB Circular A-133 (Subpart C.315, Paragraphs (a) & (b))]	☐			
44	Y / N	Has the grantee implemented procedures to determine allowability, allocability, and reasonableness of costs as required? [45 CFR Parts 74.21(b)(6), 92.20(b)(5)]	☐			
45	Y / N	[THIS QUESTION APPLIES TO PRIVATE NON-PROFITS ONLY] Does the grantee fail to have the required insurance coverage? [45 CFR Parts 1301.11, 74.31. (Not applicable for grantees subject to Part 92, who are generally self-insured.)] [Select subsection(s) of 45 CFR Part 1301.11 that are appropriate to the circumstance.]	☐			
46	Y / N	Does the grantee meet property management standards for nonexpendable personal property, including conducting a physical inventory at least once every 2 years and having all vehicle titles available? [To assist in answering this question, first consider the questions below.] [45 CFR Parts 74.30, 74.33(a)(1), 74.34(f)(1)(ix)(3), 92.31-92.32]	☐			

	Potential Area of Noncompliance (✓)	Documents Reviewed	People Interviewed	Additional Comments
Y N Is equipment vulnerable to theft, securely fastened or protected in some other manner?	☐			
Y N Are identification plates and numbers affixed to office furniture and fixtures, equipment, and other portable assets?	☐			
47 Does the grantee have inadequate supplies or materials or outdated equipment? [45 CFR Part 1304.53(b)(1)] Y☑ N	☐			
48 Are costs for development and administration necessary and of benefit to the program, properly allocated and documented, and not in excess of 15% of total costs unless a waiver has been granted? [45 CFR Part 1301.32] [Select subsection(s) of 45 CFR Part 1301.32 that are appropriate to the circumstance.] Y N☑	☐			

	Potential Area of Noncompliance (✓)	Documents Reviewed	People Interviewed	Additional Comments
49 Y N	☐			
If the grantee and/or delegate agencies charge indirect costs, are these costs supported by a current negotiated indirect cost rate? [OMB Circulars A-122 (Attachment A, Paragraph E.2.c. & g.), A-87 (Attachment A, Paragraph H), and A-21 (Section G, subpart 11.g)]				
50 Y N	☐			
[THIS QUESTION APPLIES TO THE GRANTEE ONLY] Did the use of Federal funds in the grantee's last budget exceed 80% of the total cost without a waiver? [45 CFR Parts 1301.20(a), 1301.21(a)&(b)]				
51 Y N	☐			
Do the source, use, and accounting of non-Federal funds meet the same requirements as Federal funds, and is the accounting of funds supported by proper source documents? [45 CFR Parts 74.23, 92.24] [Select subsection(s) of 45 CFR Parts 74.23 and/or 92.24 that are appropriate to the circumstance.]				
52 Y N	☐			
Are any of the procurement transactions conducted in a manner that does not provide for open and free competition? [45 CFR Parts 74.43, 92.36(c)]				

Section III

	Potential Area of Noncompliance (✓)	Documents Reviewed	People Interviewed	Additional Comments

Place a check in the box under the "Potential Area of Noncompliance" heading if the weight of the evidence you have collected during this review (including the answers to the questions in Sections I and II of the checklist) suggests that the grantee/delegate is not in compliance with the specified requirement:

	Potential Area of Noncompliance (✓)	Documents Reviewed	People Interviewed	Additional Comments
53 Grantee lacks effective control over and accountability for all grantee and/or delegate funds, property, and other assets. [45 CFR Parts 74.21(b)(3), 92.20(b)(3)]	☐			
54 Governing body does not ensure that appropriate internal controls are established and implemented to safeguard funds. [45 CFR Part 1304.50(g)(2)]	☐			

Team Member Summary Worksheet

Summary of Results for Fiscal Management

Areas where the program is working well. Provide examples of program strengths or areas where the program exceeds *Performance Standards*:

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Areas where the program needs improvement:

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Additional areas of concern:

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TEAM LEADER BOOKLET ANALYSIS

Booklet # _____

Booklet Name: _____

Program Strengths	Data Source
Specific Program Weaknesses and Areas to Strengthen	Data Source

Program Self-Assessment Booklet 8

Child Development and Health Services: Prevention & Early Intervention

Core Question to be answered by the Self-Assessment team:

How does the grantee implement a comprehensive system of services for preventing health problems and intervening promptly when they exist?

Purpose:

The objective is to support healthy physical development by encouraging practices that prevent illness or injury, and by promoting positive, culturally relevant health behaviors that enhance life-long well-being (Introduction to 1304.22, p. 83).

This booklet will help you assess if the program meets Federal *Performance Standards* relating to Prevention & Early Intervention. Related *Performance Standards* include: 1304.20; 1304.21(c)(1)(iii); 1304.22-1304.24; 1304.40(c)(2)(3); 1304.40(f); 1304.41(a)(2); 1304.41(b); 1304.53(a)(6); 1304.53(a)(8); 1304.53(a)(10)(i)-1304.53(a)(10)(iii); 1304.53(a)(10)(v)-1304.53(a)(10)(xvii); 1306.30(c); 1306.33(c)(3); 1308.6; 1308.20; 1304.40(c)(1)(i)-1304.40(c)(1)(iii); 1310.21.

As you conduct your assessment of the program's prevention and early intervention activities, pay close attention to how the program ensures that:

- Parents are involved as full partners in prevention and early intervention
- Children and families are linked to an ongoing source of continuous, accessible health care and children are kept up-to-date on a schedule of well-child care
- Preventive health practices are taught to children and parents
- Nutrition and mental health services are provided to children and families that are responsive to their needs

Helpful tools to support data collection in this area follow.

Review:

Ask the Head Start director and/or responsible manager to provide you with access to the following documents:

- Community Assessment
- The results of the child/family record audit conducted by the team assessing record keeping and reporting and/or a sample of children's records
- Written plans describing health, nutrition, and mental health services
- Health and safety policies and procedures
- Sample menus
- Health and Safety Checklists completed by program staff
- Transportation Services Checklist completed by program staff
- *PIR* information
- Evidence of pedestrian safety training
- Ongoing monitoring reports
- **Other important data sources relevant to this area such as the *PRISM* report, strategic plan or short and long term program goals**

In addition, obtain the results of the Health and Safety Checklist and the Transportation Services Checklist administered by the team responsible for the Facilities, Materials, Equipment and Transportation booklet.

<u>Note:</u> The team reviewing record-keeping and reporting systems is responsible for completing an audit of children/family records as a part of their assessment. Review the results of their audit and ask team members if they discovered answers to the following questions. You may want to supplement this information by reviewing a number of sample files on your own.

Do children's files indicate that the program assessed whether the child has an ongoing, continuous source of health care within 90 days of entry into the program?

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Do files contain the information necessary to assess if children are up-to-date with well-child care visits and have received recommended immunizations and screenings?

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Do files for infants and toddlers indicate that screenings for developmental, sensory, and behavioral concerns are completed within 45 days of entry into the program?

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Do files for 3-5 year olds indicate that screenings for developmental, sensory, and behavioral concerns are completed within 45 days of entry into the program?

❏ Yes   ❏ No   Comment: _____

Are the 45 day screenings done in collaboration with each child's parent and are they linguistically and age appropriate for the following areas: developmental, sensory (auditory and visual), behavioral, motor, language, social, cognitive, perceptual and emotional skills?

❏ Yes   ❏ No   Comment: _____

If the program did not identify a source of health care, is there evidence of assistance provided to the parents to find one?

❏ Yes   ❏ No   Comment: _____

Is there evidence in the file that parents are informed and made aware of the various screenings as they occur (permission forms, contact notes, home visit reports, notification of results)?

❏ Yes   ❏ No   Comment: _____

Review written plans describing health, nutrition, and mental health services to answer the following:

Is there evidence that these plans have been updated so that services respond to Community Assessment data and meet the current needs of children and families?

❏ Yes   ❏ No   Comment: _____

Do plans describe the use of early intervention and education strategies so that services are preventive in nature?

❏ Yes   ❏ No   Comment: _____

Is there evidence that parents and children have received training on pedestrian safety and bus safety practices?

❏ Yes   ❏ No   Comment: _____

Review sample menus to answer the following:

Are there a variety of foods made available to children, taking into account cultural and ethnic preferences?
❏ Yes   ❏ No   Comment: _____

Do the menus contain nutritious well-balanced meals that are age-appropriate?
❏ Yes   ❏ No   Comment: _____

Interview:

Make arrangements to meet and interview health, nutrition, mental health, and transportation services staff. Sample questions for the manager of health and nutrition services and/or the nutrition consultant:

Describe your approach to providing preventive health services to children and families at Head Start.

_____

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How do you go about accessing medical services for families who are not connected to a regular system of health care? (i.e., Does the program assist families in accessing their State Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)?)

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_____

What do you do when families do not have dental services?

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Describe how nutrition services are provided to children and families in this program.

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How do you ensure that the meals served to children meet all USDA regulations?

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_____

How do you accommodate special dietary needs for individual children?

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_____

Describe how health and nutrition education is provided to children. Are these services integrated into child development experiences?

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How do you share information with families that promotes nutrition, health, and safety at home?

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Sample questions for the manager of mental health services and/or the mental health consultant:

Is there a regular schedule of visits by a mental health professional?

_____

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Describe how the mental health consultant works with staff.

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Describe how the mental health consultant works with children and families.

_____

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Sample Questions for Early Head Start Managers:

How does this team make sure there is a comprehensive system for preventing health problems and for intervening when problems exist, especially with regard to pregnant women and children from birth to three years of age?

_____

_____

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_____

If your Early Head Start program serves pregnant women, describe how you assist women to access comprehensive prenatal and postpartum health care.

_____

_____

_____

_____

If your Early Head Start program serves expectant families, how do you provide prenatal education about fetal development, including the risks from smoking and alcohol, labor and delivery, postpartum recovery, including information on maternal depression and the benefits of breastfeeding?

_____

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Sample Question for Person Responsible for Transportation Services:

How does the program ensure that all parents and children are trained on pedestrian safety and bus safety practices?

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Incorporating Relevant Data Sources:

Additional observations, document reviews, or interview questions that this team may choose to add:

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Include any key insights you may have learned from reviewing important data sources such as the *PRISM* report, *PIR* data, Community Assessment, strategic plan or short and long term program goals:

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Team Member Summary Worksheet

Summary of Results for Prevention and Early Intervention

Areas where the program is working well. Provide examples of program strengths or areas where the program exceeds *Performance Standards*:

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Areas where the program needs improvement:

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Additional areas of concern:

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TEAM LEADER BOOKLET ANALYSIS

Booklet # _____

Booklet Name: _____

Program Strengths	Data Source

Specific Program Weaknesses and Areas to Strengthen	Data Source

Program Self-Assessment Booklet 9

Child Development and Health Services: Tracking and Follow-up

Core Question to be answered by the Self-Assessment team:

How does the grantee track the provision of all child health and developmental services and ensure that follow-up services are received in a timely manner?

Purpose:

The objective is to ensure that all child health and developmental concerns are identified, and children and families are linked to an ongoing source of continuous, accessible care to meet their basic needs (Introduction to 1304.20, p. 41).

This booklet will help you assess if the program meets Federal *Performance Standards* relating to monitoring and necessary follow-up of all child health and developmental services. Related *Performance Standards* include: 1304.20(c)-1304.20(f); 1304.41(a)(1); 1304.51(g); 1308.18.

As you conduct your assessment of the program's health care tracking and follow-up, pay close attention to how the program:

- Utilizes a system for tracking health and developmental services to provide a safety net for children to ensure that they receive all necessary services
- Promotes communication between and among managers and staff to plan and coordinate follow-up services in an integrated way
- Accesses community resources to connect children and families with follow-up services

Helpful tools to support data collection in this area follow.

Review:

Ask the Head Start director and/or responsible manager to provide you with access to:

- Sample child/family files
- Written plans and procedures describing health services
- Sample tracking reports
- **Important data sources relevant to this area such as the *PRISM* report, *PIR* data, Community Assessment, strategic plan or short and long term program goals**

Are there procedures to track the provision of health care services?

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Are there written procedures on the handling, storage and administration of medications?

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Are there procedures by which staff can identify any new or recurring medical, dental or developmental concerns so that they may quickly make appropriate referrals?

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Note: At least one staff person should sit on this review team so they can access and review child/family files. Other team members may not have access to these files based on the program's confidentiality policy.

Ask your team leader to provide you with a number of children's records that represent children with identified health and nutritional needs. Review these records to answer the following:

Are parents requested to inform the program of a child's particular health needs and dietary considerations (allergies, medications) upon enrollment?

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Do the files indicate that follow-up plans have been developed and implemented for health conditions that have been identified?

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Are doctor's instructions and parental consent obtained before medication is administered?

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Is there a record maintained of all medications dispensed?

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Is the record reviewed regularly with parents?

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Interview:

The Self-Assessment team member should interview the health manager. Use the questions below to assist you with interviews:

What are your procedures for tracking child health services?

_____

_____

_____

_____

How do you make sure follow-up treatments are provided in a timely manner?

_____

_____

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_____

Describe the system that you use within your own program to integrate and coordinate services to children and families. Do managers meet regularly to communicate about and coordinate services? Describe that process.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Do direct service staff (e.g., teachers and family service workers) meet to coordinate services? Describe that process.

_____

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Describe the role that the parent plays in arranging and providing for follow-up services to children.

_____

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_____

Describe the role that direct service staff (e.g., teachers, family service workers) have in implementing follow-up services to children.

_____

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How has the program reached out to partner with health care providers and other providers in the community to link children and families with needed services?

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Incorporating Relevant Data Sources:

Additional observations, document reviews, or interview questions that this team may choose to add:

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Include any key insights you may have learned from reviewing important data sources such as the *PRISM* report, *PIR* data, Community Assessment, strategic plan or short and long term program goals:

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Team Member Summary Worksheet

Summary of Results for Tracking and Follow-Up

Areas where the program is working well. Provide examples of program strengths or areas where the program exceeds *Performance Standards*:

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Areas where the program needs improvement:

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Additional areas of concern:

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TEAM LEADER BOOKLET ANALYSIS

Booklet # _____

Booklet Name: _____

Program Strengths	Data Source

Specific Program Weaknesses and Areas to Strengthen	Data Source

Program Self-Assessment Booklet 10

Child Development and Health Services: Individualization

Core Question to be answered by the Self-Assessment team:

How does the grantee, in consultation with the family, individualize the program of child development and health services to meet each child's unique characteristics, strengths and needs?

Purpose:

Individualization assures that the program recognizes the uniqueness of each child and staff respond by individualizing approaches to child development, education and family partnership.

This booklet will help the team assess if the program meets Federal *Performance Standards* relating to how services are responsive to each child. Related *Performance Standards* include: 1304.20(d); 1304.20(f); 1301.21(a); 1304.21(b); 1304.21(c)(1)(i); 1304.23(b)(1); 1304.40(a)(2); 1308.19.

As you conduct your assessment of the program's ability to individualize child development and health services for children, look for evidence that:

- Families are involved in establishing goals for their children to meet their social/ emotional, language and academic needs in order to be prepared for school
- The system used by the program to assess children is ongoing
- Individualization addresses:
  - ✓ Child interests
  - ✓ The eight domains of learning and development
  - ✓ Temperament
  - ✓ Language
  - ✓ Cultural background
  - ✓ Learning style
- Teaching staff tie individual children's goals into the overall curriculum

Helpful tools to support data collection in this area follow.

Review:

Ask the Head Start director and/or responsible manager to provide you with access to the following documents:

- Evidence of individualized planning
- Evidence that plans address child interests, developmental strengths, temperament, needs, oral language and early literacy skills, cultural background and learning style
- Ongoing monitoring reports
- **Important data sources relevant to this area such as the *PRISM* report, *PIR* data, Community Assessment, strategic plan or short and long term program goals**

Reminder: a member of the staff serving on the Self-Assessment team must conduct file reviews.

Record your results below:

My review of ____(fill in number) child files revealed that:

____ all files show evidence of individualized planning
____ a substantial number of files show evidence of individualized planning
____ very few files show evidence of individualized planning

Comments:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Early Head Start			
(Please check appropriate column)	Most of the time	Some of the time	Rarely
Files show that individualization addresses:			
■　Child interests			
■　Developmental strengths			
■　Temperament			
■　Needs			
■　Learning styles			
■　Languages			
■　Early literacy skills (e.g., book knowledge, book language, phonological awareness, print awareness)			
■　Math and science concepts			
■　Cultural background			
■　Health/nutrition considerations			
Information in the child files shows that parents provide input into the education and child development services that are planned for their child			
Classroom curriculum plans reflect individualization and are based on information contained in the child files			
Planning for socializations indicates evidence of individualization			
Socializations include parents and their infants and toddlers			
Head Start			
(Please check appropriate column)	Most of the time	Some of the time	Rarely
Files show that individualization addresses:			
■　Child interests			
■　Developmental strengths			
■　Temperament			
■　Needs			
■　Learning styles			
■　Languages			
■　Early literacy skills (e.g., book knowledge, book language, phonological awareness, print awareness)			
■　Math and science concepts			
■　Cultural background			
■　Health/nutrition considerations			
Information in the child files shows that parents provide input into the education and child development services that are planned for their child			
Classroom curriculum plans reflect individualization and are based on information contained in the child files			

Observe:

Two members of the assessment team, one staff person with a child development background and another staff person or parent, should select a specific number of children to observe. The "observation team" might have two or three "focus" children. In conducting an observation, team members should focus on one child at a time for an extended period (typically no less than 30 minutes).

The following questions are adapted from the *PRISM* Classroom Observation and *PRISM* Home Visit Observation tools and the National Institute for Child Health and Development Caregiver Language Checklist. Use your observations of children to answer the following and record your comments:

Is there evidence that the teacher or caregiver responds to the child's vocalizations or bids for attention? (e.g. the caregiver responds verbally by repeating a sound or naming the object the infant/toddler is pointing to or comments on what the child said to expand the conversation.)

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

_____

Is there evidence that the teacher or caregiver supports the learning of the child? (e.g., notices what the child is working on, takes out a special puzzle or helps a child with a disability participate in a physical game by holding hands or going slowly.)

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

_____

Is there evidence that the teacher or caregiver adjusts the activity to reflect the needs of the child? (e.g., accepts non-verbal response to a question or offers adaptive equipment like larger crayons or double-handled scissors to the child.)

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

_____

Is there evidence that the teacher or caregiver provides a supportive learning environment? (e.g., offers a hand to a new walker, moves furniture to accommodate a child with motor planning problems.)

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

_____

Interview:

A member of the assessment team should interview teachers and/or home visitors, family child care providers, and a sample of parents. Use the following questions to assist you with interviews:

Questions for education managers, teaching staff and home visitors:

How does the curriculum support individual needs, abilities and learning styles of children?

_____

_____

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How does the curriculum support individual needs in the areas of oral language, literacy, and school readiness?

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What information is taken into account to individualize planning for each child?

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Talk about three children you currently work with. What have assessments revealed? How have you used this information to design activities and experiences to support these children in attaining new goals?

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Describe the practices within your program that ensure a continuity of services and care for children as they enter and exit the program.

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How does the program involve parents in supporting individualized child development?

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How does the program involve parents in supporting individualization based on oral language, early literacy and academic skills?

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For Early Head Start:

Are there adequate transitions from Early Head Start to Head Start or another setting in the community? Does transition planning for Early Head Start children begin six months before the child's third birthday?

_____

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_____

Questions for parents include:

What kinds of things is your child learning by participating in Head Start?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Are there other things that you would like to see your child learning? If yes, have you discussed this with your child's teacher/home visitor?

_____

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_____

Have you participated in home visits with the teaching staff as well as staff/parent conferences? Tell me about those visits and conferences.

_____

_____

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Do you work together with your child's teacher/home visitor to plan activities that you can do with your child in your home?

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Incorporating Relevant Data Sources:

Additional observations, document reviews, or interview questions that this team may choose to add:

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Include any key insights you may have learned from reviewing important data sources such as the *PRISM* report, *PIR* data, Community Assessment, strategic plan or short and long term program goals:

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Team Member Summary Worksheet

Summary of Results for Individualization

Areas where the program is working well. Provide examples of program strengths or areas where the program exceeds *Performance Standards*:

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Areas where the program needs improvement:

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Additional areas of concern:

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TEAM LEADER BOOKLET ANALYSIS

Booklet # _____

Booklet Name: _____

Program Strengths	Data Source

Specific Program Weaknesses and Areas to Strengthen	Data Source

Program Self-Assessment Booklet 11

Child Development and Health Services: Disabilities Services

Core Question to be answered by Self-Assessment team:

How does the grantee ensure that individual services are effectively provided to children with diagnosed or suspected disabilities?

Purpose:

The purpose is to ensure that children with disabilities enrolled in the program receive all of the services to which they are entitled in the least restrictive environment. (Purpose and application of Part 1308, p. 255.)

This booklet will help the Self-Assessment team determine if the program meets Federal *Performance Standards* relating to disabilities services. Related *Performance Standards* include: 1304.20(c)(4); 1304.20(f); 1304.21(a)(1)(ii); 1304.23(a)(2); 1304.24(a)(3)(iii); 1304.41(a)(4); 1304.53(a)(10)(xvii); 1304.53(b)(1)(iii); 1308; 1310.22(b).

As you conduct your Self-Assessment of program services to children with disabilities, pay close attention to:

- The process used by the program to assess children's needs for special services
- How the program engages parents as partners when planning special services for children
- Evidence of the inclusion of children with disabilities in the Head Start program
- Evidence of Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs) in Early Head Start programs and Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) for Head Start programs

Note: Individual programs may wish to substitute terms used in this booklet with terms used by your local school district (e.g., special needs, disabilities, special services, disabilities services).

Helpful tools to support data collection in this area follow.

Observe:

Check in with Self-Assessment team members assigned to *curriculum* and *individualization*. Ask them to summarize for you what they discovered about the program's approach to serving children with disabilities during their assessment process. In particular, review with them the results of the **Curriculum Observation Instrument** pertaining to serving children with disabilities.

Review:

Ask the Head Start director and/or responsible manager to provide you with access to the following documents:

- Written plans describing how disabilities services will be delivered
- Copies of all Interagency Agreements with Local Education Agencies (LEAs), Part C, and other programs serving children with disabilities and their families
- A sample of records for children with disabilities (Note: assign this task to someone on your team who can review children's records without breaching the confidentiality policy of the program.)
- Ongoing monitoring reports
- **Important data sources relevant to this area such as the *PRISM* report, *PIR* data, Community Assessment, strategic plan or short and long term program goals**

As you review the above documents and records answer the following:

Is there evidence that the disabilities services plan has been updated annually?

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Are there interagency agreements between the program and LEAs that provide services to enable the effective participation of children with disabilities?

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Do files demonstrate a timely process for assessing children with suspected disabilities, engaging parents, and arranging for services, as needed? (Note: A meeting to develop the IEP must be held within thirty calendar days of a determination that the child needs special education and related services.)

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

If you have an Early Head Start program, is there evidence of a formal partnership with the local Part C agency (provider of early intervention services)?

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

If you have an Early Head Start program, is there an agreement that describes the process for coordinating services for infants and toddlers?

❏ Yes   ❏ No   Comment: _____

Is there evidence of the family's involvement in the development of IEPs and IFSPs?

❏ Yes   ❏ No   Comment: _____

Do IEPs and IFSPs identify persons responsible for planning, delivering, and supervising services and projected dates for services to begin?

❏ Yes   ❏ No   Comment: _____

Are transition plans developed for children that provide continuity of care as children with disabilities move from one program to the next?

❏ Yes   ❏ No   Comment: _____

Interview:

The Self-Assessment team member should interview the:

- Manager of disabilities services
- Teachers, home visitors, family child care providers, family service workers
- Parents of children with disabilities
- If possible, a representative from the local LEA (Head Start) and/or Part C agency (Early Head Start)

Use the questions below to assist you with interviews:

Questions for the disabilities services manager:

What efforts are taken to recruit children with disabilities (including children with severe disabilities)?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Is there a system in place to track the provision of disabilities services? Describe the follow-up that occurs when timeframes are not met.

_____

_____

_____

_____

How are children with disabilities included in ongoing assessment? Are all children included? Give examples of how appropriate accommodations were made for their special needs.

_____

_____

_____

_____

What types of modifications has the program made to meet the specific needs of children with disabilities over the past year?

_____

_____

_____

_____

How does the program provide parents with information and assistance in understanding and advocating for services and supports needed to address their child's special needs?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Has the program been successful in accessing the additional resources (including transportation) that may be outlined in the IEPs and IFSPs of the children you serve?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Questions for education staff:

Provide us with some examples of how you have modified the program and individualized services to ensure the inclusion of children with disabilities in the full range of program activities.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Questions for education/family services staff:

Provide us with some examples of the information, support, and guidance available to assist you in providing services to children with disabilities and their families.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Questions for families:

Describe how the Head Start program involved you in planning services for your child.

_____

_____

_____

_____

What resources in the community have you heard about through Head Start that can offer you assistance?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Have you participated in any training that specifically prepares you to advocate for your child?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Questions for Program Partners:

Describe your relationship with the Head Start program.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Do you have an interagency agreement in place that describes the process you and Head Start will follow to provide services to children with disabilities? If yes, describe the major components of the interagency agreement.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Are there challenges or barriers you face in providing services to Head Start children?

_____

_____

_____

_____

How are you working with Head Start to overcome these barriers?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Incorporating Relevant Data Sources:

Additional observations, document reviews, or interview questions that this team may choose to add:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Include any key insights you may have learned from reviewing important data sources such as the *PRISM* report, *PIR* data, Community Assessment, strategic plan or short and long term program goals:

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Team Member Summary Worksheet

Summary of Results for Disabilities Services

Areas where the program is working well. Provide examples of program strengths or areas where the program exceeds *Performance Standards*:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Areas where the program needs improvement:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Additional areas of concern:

_____

_____

_____

_____

TEAM LEADER BOOKLET ANALYSIS

Booklet # _____

Booklet Name: _____

Program Strengths	Data Source
Specific Program Weaknesses and Areas to Strengthen	**Data Source**

Program Self-Assessment Booklet 12

Child Development and Health Services: Curriculum and Assessment

Core Question to be answered by the Self-Assessment team:

How has the grantee engaged in a process of curriculum selection and/or development, implementation, and evaluation resulting in a written plan that supports the growth of children's social competence, including school readiness, for each identified program option?

Purpose:

The objective is to provide all children with a safe, nurturing, engaging, and secure learning environment, in order to help them gain the awareness, skills, and confidence necessary to succeed in their present environment, and to deal with later responsibilities in school and in life. (Introduction to 1304.21, p. 58.)

This booklet will help the team assess if the program meets Federal *Performance Standards* relating to curriculum development and implementation. Related *Performance Standards* include: 1304.21; 1304.23(b)-1304.23(c); 1304.3(a)(5); 1304.40(e)-1304.40(f); 1306.30(b); 1308.4(c); 1310.21.

As you conduct your assessment of the program's ability to develop an appropriate curriculum, see if you can confirm that:

- Families have been given the opportunity to be involved in curriculum development that meets the social/emotional, language and literacy, and academic needs of their children in order to be prepared for school
- The written curriculum contains core elements of sound child development and learning principles and developmentally appropriate practices
- The implementation of the curriculum is evident in classrooms, family child care homes, or in other program options offered by the program

Included are adapted tools from the *PRISM*: the Classroom, Family Child Care or Socialization Experience Observation Instrument (page 8); the Early Head Start Classroom, Family Child Care or Socialization Experience Observation Instrument (page 15) and; the Head Start Home Visit Observation Instrument (page 22). These are optional tools that team members may find helpful in assessing the program's curriculum. Other helpful tools to support data collection in this area follow.

Observe:

The team member should observe a sample of classrooms, socialization settings, and/or family child care homes (depending on the options offered by your program). Use the attached curriculum observation instrument or your own data collection tool. Duplicate the instrument as necessary to complete a good sampling of the child development services offered by the program.

Review:

Ask the Head Start director and/or responsible manager to provide you with access to the following documents. (In order to maintain confidentiality, only a staff member serving on your Self-Assessment team can review these files.)

- The written curriculum
- The written plan describing child development services
- Daily and weekly classroom plans
- Child progress records
- Documentation of parent involvement
- Ongoing monitoring reports
- **Important data sources relevant to this area such as the *PRISM* report, *PIR* data, Community Assessment, strategic plan or short and long term program goals**

Use the checklist below to assist your document review:

Does the Early Head Start written curriculum include:

Goals for children's development, learning and school readiness?	❏ Yes	❏ No
The experiences through which they will achieve these goals?	❏ Yes	❏ No
What staff and parents do to help children achieve these goals?	❏ Yes	❏ No
The materials needed to support the implementation of the curriculum?	❏ Yes	❏ No

Does the Head Start written curriculum include:

Goals for children's development, learning and school readiness?	❏ Yes	❏ No
The experiences through which they will achieve these goals?	❏ Yes	❏ No
What staff and parents do to help children achieve these goals?	❏ Yes	❏ No
The materials needed to support the implementation of the curriculum?	❏ Yes	❏ No

Is the curriculum consistent with the *Performance Standards* and based on sound child development and learning principles? ❏ Yes ❏ No

Does it provide appropriate and comprehensive programming for the oral language, early literacy, social-emotional, cognitive, and physical development of children of all ages served by the program? ❏ Yes ❏ No

For preschool children, does the curriculum include experiences in the eight domains (language, literacy, mathematics, science, creative arts, social and emotional development, approaches to learning, and physical development and health)? ❏ Yes ❏ No

Does the curriculum and assessment process support the inclusion of children with disabilities? ❏ Yes ❏ No

Does the curriculum and assessment process support the inclusion of the home language of the children? ❏ Yes ❏ No

Are health, nutrition, mental health, and safety education integrated into the curriculum? ❏ Yes ❏ No

Does the curriculum include transition issues? ❏ Yes ❏ No

Does curriculum implementation, including assessment, provide appropriate environments and comprehensive programming for children, from birth to five years old? ❏ Yes ❏ No

Is there a written plan describing child development services that gets updated annually to reflect the changing needs of children? ❏ Yes ❏ No

Do the ongoing assessment tools address the eight domains and thirteen mandated elements and indicators? ❏ Yes ❏ No

Is the tool appropriate to children's ages, home languages, cultures, and special needs? ❏ Yes ❏ No

Comments:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Interview:

A Self-Assessment team member should interview the education manager and ask:

How does your team engage with parents to select, develop, implement and evaluate the curriculum for each program option? How do you ensure that the curriculum supports the oral language development, literacy skills, and the growth of the social competence of children?

_____

_____

_____

_____

How have you incorporated outcome-based measures into curriculum development and implementation?

_____

_____

_____

_____

How do you ensure that the curriculum supports children whose home language is different than English?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Does ongoing assessment align with the curriculum and cover all the major goals and objectives?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Are teachers and other staff members well-trained in using the ongoing assessment tools to provide accurate and consistent information on children's progress?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Are teachers and other staff members provided adequate time and support to record and review ongoing assessment information so that they can understand it and use it appropriately in adjusting teaching strategies, materials and learning opportunities for groups of children and for individual children?

_____

_____

_____

_____

For children who are transported to the program, how is the time spent riding the bus used to reinforce the curriculum and otherwise foster healthy child development?

_____

_____

_____

_____

A Self-Assessment team member should interview teachers and/or home visitors and family child care providers and ask:

How is the curriculum consistent with the *Performance Standards* and sound child development and learning principles?

_____

_____

_____

_____

How are parents involved in curriculum development and reporting child progress?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Tell me how your classroom environment and daily schedule supports the curriculum.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Tell me how your classroom environment supports an enriched language and early literacy environment.

_____

_____

_____

_____

What process do you use for curriculum planning?

_____

_____

_____

_____

How do you evaluate children's progress?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Incorporating Relevant Data Sources:

Additional observations, document reviews, or interview questions that this team may choose to add:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Include any key insights you may have learned from reviewing important data sources such as the *PRISM* report, *PIR* data, Community Assessment, strategic plan or short and long term program goals:

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CLASSROOM, FAMILY CHILD CARE, or SOCIALIZATION EXPERIENCE

OBSERVATION INSTRUMENT
(Adapted from *PRISM*)

Instructions: Make arrangements to visit a cross-section of classrooms, family child care homes, and/or socializations. Be sure to include child care partnership classrooms in your selection. Spend some time sitting and observing the setting to gather enough information to complete the instrument. You may want to pair with another Self-Assessment team member. You can then work together to reach consensus regarding your interpretations of the activity you observe. Team members engaged in this process should have knowledge of appropriate early childhood practice.

Use this observation tool to observe classrooms, family child care and socializations. *Duplicate this form for each site the Self-Assessment team visits.*

1. Teacher Interaction and Strategies			
■ Adults using a variety of intentional strategies that vary in complexity ■ Supervision of all indoor and outdoor activities ■ Positive child guidance and appropriate limits ■ Materials are accessible for children			
Observe: What are the children doing? What are the teachers and adults doing? What is the environment like?			
Examples you might look for include:	Yes	No	Comments
■ Child-initiated and adult-directed activities			
■ Individual and small group experiences			
■ Children exploring and making choices			
■ Timely, predictable, and unhurried routines and transitions			
■ Talking to children, singing and playing with them during transitions, mealtimes, and other routines			

2. Facilitating Children's Language and Early Literacy Development

- Language use and interaction among and between children and adults
- Adults fostering children's communication, including home language
- Experiences that develop auditory and visual discrimination
- Experiences that support creative expression
- Experiences that develop school-readiness skills in early literacy
- Books that are accessible

Observe: What are the children doing? What are the teachers and adults doing? What is the environment like?

Examples you might look for include:	Yes	No	Comments
Alphabet posters, puzzles and books			
Examples of functional print and other materials in appropriate places: mailboxes, sign-in charts, maps, helper charts and schedules			
Opportunities for children to scribble, write and dictate stories and messages			
Art, music, rhyming songs and movement			
Learning activities such as games, puzzles and books that promote knowledge of letters (alphabet) and sounds			
Adults reading and discussing stories one-on-one and in small groups			
Books that are accessible for children to choose, to look at alone, to share with a friend, or to take home			
Adults and children asking questions and engaged in meaningful conversations			
Experiences, materials, conversation and activities that support the language used at home and English as a second language			

3. Facilitating Children's Math and Science Development

- Experiences that develop skills in mathematics and science understanding
- Experiences that develop auditory and visual discrimination
- Opportunities for children to discover how numerical concepts relate to other concepts

Observe: What are the children doing? What are the teachers and adults doing? What is the environment like?

Examples you might look for include:	Yes	No	Comments
Puzzles, games, unit blocks, and manipulatives that range in complexity			
Materials and experiences that develop counting, sequencing and one-to-one correspondence			
Materials and experiences that encourage understanding of cause and effect and spatial relationships such as Legos®, sand/water table			
Opportunities for children to discover how mathematical concepts relate to other concepts, e.g., measuring or weighing			
Opportunities for children to count, classify, sequence, sort and match			
Children experiment, describe and make predictions			
Children using recipes for making snacks			
Children caring for plants and animals and learning about science in their surroundings			
Adults asking open-ended questions in ways that extend children's thinking			

4. Facilitating Children's Social and Emotional Development

- Experiences that foster trust, independence and self-esteem
- Age-appropriate expectations of children
- Adults interacting in supportive ways
- Experiences that help children develop social skills, competence, respect for others and positive attitudes towards learning

Observe: What are the children doing? What are the teachers and adults doing? What is the environment like?

Examples you might look for include:	Yes	No	Comments
Self-portraits and family pictures			
Books, stories, puppets, and other dramatic play experiences			
Interactive games and activities			
Familiar routines and transitions			
Clear, consistent age-appropriate rules developed with child input			
Children accessing materials independently			
Adults timely response to children's cries and other cues			
Adults encouraging and modeling problem solving, behaviors and language			
Singing or talking during routines and transitions			

5. Facilitating Children's Physical Development

- Experiences that develop sensory and motor skills
- Experiences that develop fine and gross motor skills
- Children using and coordinating small muscles, including eyes, hands and eye-hand coordination
- Sufficient safe indoor and outdoor space with age-appropriate equipment and materials

Observe: What are the children doing?   What are the teachers and adults doing?   What is the environment like?

Examples you might look for include:	Yes	No	Comments
Tools such as blocks, beads, scissors, stapler and writing or drawing tools, pencils and brushes, as appropriate			
Opportunities and sufficient space for children to walk, run, jump and climb			
Age and ability-appropriate equipment and materials			
Children using motor skills in daily routines such as pouring juice or milk, serving themselves, buttoning and zipping			
Children manipulate materials such as sand, water and clay			

6. Prevention and Early Intervention-Integrating Health, Nutrition, Mental Health, Safety, and Wellness

■ Health, nutrition and mental health integrated into routines and children's learning experiences.

Observe: What are the children doing? What are the teachers and adults doing? What is the environment like?

Examples you might look for include:	Yes	No	Comments
■ Toothbrushing and handwashing			
■ Children using tissues and throwing them in the wastebasket after use			
■ Sufficient time for meals			
■ Adults and pre-school children sharing family-style meals and meaningful conversations			
■ Children involved in food experiences			
■ Topical books, songs, games, and fingerplays			
■ Materials available for socio-dramatic play			
■ Adults and children talking about visits to the dentist and doctor			
■ Experiences representative of children's cultures			
■ Children instructed in pedestrian safety			

7. Individualizing and Disabilities Services

- Respect for the culture, language, ethnicity, family and ability of each child
- Facilities that ensure children's safety, comfort and participation
- Environment and curriculum that reflect the IEP
- Adults observing and assessing children's behavior and progress

Observe: What are the children doing? What are the teachers and adults doing? What is the environment like?

Examples you might look for include:	Yes	No	Comments
Books, music, posters, and games in different languages and representing different cultures			
Dolls, posters, pictures and books that represent children with disabilities			
Special furniture, equipment, and materials, if needed, to accommodate a child with disabilities			
Experiences required in the IEP			
Adults working with individual children and with small groups of children			
Use of post-its, notebooks, folders, cameras, or other tools used to record observations			

EARLY HEAD START CLASSROOM, FAMILY CHILD CARE, or SOCIALIZATION EXPERIENCE

OBSERVATION INSTRUMENT
(Adapted from *PRISM*)

Instructions: Make arrangements to visit a cross-section of classrooms, family child care homes and/or socializations. Be sure to include child care partnership classrooms in your selection. Spend some time sitting and observing the setting to gather enough information to complete the instrument. You may want to pair with another Self-Assessment team member. You can then work together to reach consensus regarding your interpretations of the activity you observe. Team members engaged in this process should have knowledge of appropriate early childhood practice.

Use this observation tool to observe classrooms, family child care and socializations. *Duplicate this form for each site the Self-Assessment team visits.*

1. Teacher Interaction and Strategies			
■ Adults using a variety of intentional strategies that vary in complexity ■ Supervision of all indoor and outdoor activities ■ Positive child guidance, e.g. infants and toddlers able to explore and play safely with teachers naming and supporting the exploration ■ Materials accessible to infants and toddlers ■ Environment arranged so infants and toddlers have places to snuggle and safely be "alone" and play "peek-a-boo".			
Observe: What are the children doing? What are the teachers and adults doing? What is the environment like?			
Examples you might look for include:	Yes	No	Comments
■ Child-initiated and adult-directed activities			
■ Individual and small group experiences			
■ Children exploring and making choices			
■ Timely, predictable and unhurried routines and transitions			
■ Talking, singing, playing with babies and toddlers during diaper changes, mealtimes and other routines			

2. Facilitating Children's Language and Literacy Development

- Infants and toddlers vocalizing and talking to each other and to adults
- Adults talking to infants and toddlers
- Experiences that develop auditory and visual discrimination
- Experiences that support creative expression
- Early literacy experiences that develop school-readiness skills

Observe: What are the children doing? What are the teachers and adults doing? What is the environment like?

Examples you might look for include:	Yes	No	Comments
■ Pictures, puzzles and books			
■ Examples of functional print and other materials in appropriate places: pictures of infants and toddlers with their names, pictures of family members with names			
■ Opportunities for toddlers to scribble, draw and dictate stories and messages			
■ Music, rhyming songs and movement			
■ Books that promote games (peek-a boo), activities (patting), and sounds ("the cow says")			
■ Adults reading or telling stories to infants and toddlers in their lap or close by			
■ Infants and toddlers choosing books to look at alone or to share with a friend, or to take home			
■ Adults naming activities and feelings, asking questions and engaging in conversations with infants and toddlers			
■ Experiences, materials, conversation and activities that support the language used at home and English as a second language			

3. Facilitating Children's Math and Science Development

- Experiences that develop skills in mathematics and science
- Experiences that develop auditory and visual discrimination

Observe: What are the children doing? What are the teachers and adults doing? What is the environment like?

Examples you might look for include:	Yes	No	Comments
Puzzles, games, unit blocks and manipulatives that range in complexity			
Materials and experiences that develop sequencing, e.g. enough toys so toddlers can create "line ups"			
Materials and experiences that encourage understanding of cause and effect and spatial relationship, e.g. busy boxes, push and pull toys			
Opportunities for toddlers to classify, sequence, sort and match			
Infants and toddlers experiment, describe and make predictions			
Toddlers helping with snacks			
Infants and toddlers learning about their surroundings, e.g. experiencing sand, water			
Adults asking toddlers open-ended questions			

4. Facilitating Children's Social and Emotional Development

- Experiences that foster independence and trust and self-esteem
- Age-appropriate expectations of children
- Adults interacting in supportive ways
- Experiences that help children develop social skills, competence, respect for others, and positive attitudes towards learning

Observe: What are the children doing? What are the teachers and adults doing? What is the environment like?

Examples you might look for include:	Yes	No	Comments
Pictures of the infants, toddlers and their families, self portraits of toddlers (body outline drawings)			
Books, stories, puppets and other dramatic play opportunities			
Interactive games and activities			
Familiar routines and transitions			
An environment that supports exploration and does not require adult prohibitions to ensure safety			
Infants and toddlers accessing materials independently			
Adults timely response to infants' and toddlers' non-verbal cues such as vocalizing, pointing, crying, smiling and talking			
Adults encouraging and modeling problem solving, behaviors and language			
Singing or talking during routines and transitions			

5. Facilitating Children's Physical Development

- Experiences that develop sensory and motor skills
- Experiences that develop fine and gross motor skills
- Children using and coordinating small muscles, including eyes, hands and eye-hand coordination
- Sufficient safe indoor and outdoor space with age-appropriate equipment and materials

Observe: What are the children doing? What are the teachers and adults doing? What is the environment like?

Examples you might look for include:	Yes	No	Comments
Opportunities and sufficient space for infants and toddlers to crawl, sit, walk, run, jump and climb safely			
Age and ability-appropriate equipment and materials			
Infants and toddlers using motor skills in daily routines as they develop, such as self feeding and using utensils			
Infants and toddlers manipulating materials such as sand and water			

6. Prevention and Early Intervention-Integrating Health, Nutrition, Mental Health, Safety, and Wellness

■ Health, nutrition, and mental health integrated into routines and children's learning experiences.

Observe: What are the children doing? What are the teachers and adults doing? What is the environment like?

Examples you might look for include:	Yes	No	Comments
■ Adults swabbing infants' gums, toddlers using toothbrushes and washing hands			
■ Toddlers using tissues and throwing them in the wastebasket after use			
■ Sufficient time for meals			
■ Adults and toddlers sharing family-style meals and talking			
■ Infants held while being fed			
■ Songs and books that name feelings			
■ Opportunities for toddlers to dress up and pretend			
■ Adults and children talking about visits to the dentist and doctor			
■ Experiences representative of children's cultures			
■ Toddlers instructed in pedestrian safety			

7. Individualizing and Disabilities Services

- Respect for the culture, language, ethnicity, family, and ability of each child
- Facilities that ensure children's safety, comfort, and participation
- Environment and curriculum that reflect the IFSP or IEP
- Adults observing and assessing children's behavior and progress.

Observe: What are the children doing? What are the teachers and adults doing? What is the environment like?

	Yes	No	Comments
Examples you might look for include:			
- Books, music, posters and games in different languages and representing different cultures			
- Dolls, posters, pictures and books that represent children with disabilities			
- Special furniture, equipment and materials, if needed, to accommodate a child with disabilities			
- Experiences and adaptations required in the IFSP			
- Adults sitting on the floor with individual infants and toddlers and with small groups of infants and toddlers			
- Use of photos to document observations of interactions between and among infants and toddlers and adults			

HEAD START HOME VISIT OBSERVATION INSTRUMENT

(Adapted from *PRISM*)

Instructions: Make arrangements to visit a cross-section of family child care homes. Spend some time sitting and observing the setting to gather enough information to complete the instrument. You may want to pair with another Self-Assessment team member. You can then work together to reach consensus regarding your interpretations of the activity you observe. Team members engaged in this process should have knowledge of appropriate early childhood practice.

Use this observation tool to observe home visits. *Duplicate this form for each site the Self-Assessment team visits.*

1. Home Visit Interactions and Strategies
How does the home visitor: ■ Demonstrate a friendly, cooperative relationship with the family? ■ Encourage parents to take leadership of the home visit? ■ Communicate in the family's preferred language? ■ Use the home as a learning environment and as a resource for curriculum experiences? ■ Understand the link between home visits and socialization experiences? ■ (For preschool children) help parents plan experiences that foster their child's development and learning in the 8 domains? ■ Help parents improve their parenting skills? ■ Plan home visits with parents to incorporate all services of the Head Start program? ■ Evaluate the home visit with parents?
Observe: What are the adults doing? What is the child doing?
Issues, Questions and Follow-up:

2. Facilitating Children's Language and Literacy Development

How does the home visitor help parents:
 	
  ■ Understand how children learn?
  ■ Provide age-appropriate experiences that support child language and literacy learning and development?
  ■ Provide school-readiness experiences through home visits and group socializations that reflect the program's curriculum?
  ■ Value creative expression?
  ■ Foster communication, including communication in the language spoken in the home?
  ■ Develop auditory and visual discrimination?

Observe: What are the adults doing? What is the child doing?
Issues, Questions, and Follow-up:

3. Facilitating Children's Math and Science Development

How does the home visitor help parents provide:

- Experiences that develop skills in mathematics?
- Experiences that develop skills in science?
- Experiences that develop auditory and visual discrimination?
- Opportunities for children to discover how numerical concepts relate to other concepts?

Observe: What are the adults doing? What is the environment like?

Issues, Questions, and Follow-up:

4. Facilitating Children's Social and Emotional Development
How do the home visits help parents: ■ Provide experiences that foster independence?   ■ Develop age-appropriate expectations of children?   ■ Interact in supportive ways?   ■ Help children develop social skills, respect for others, and friendships?   ■ Help children feel successful, competent and positive toward learning?
Observe: What are the adults doing? What is the child doing?
Issues, Questions, and Follow-up:

5. Facilitating Children's Physical Development

How does the home visitor help parents:

- Provide experiences that develop sensory and motor skills?
- Provide experiences that develop fine and gross motor skills?
- Assist children in using and coordinating small muscles including eyes, hands and eye-hand coordination?
- Provide sufficient safe age-appropriate equipment and materials?
- Supervise their child during physical activities?

Observe: What are the adults doing? What is the child doing?

Issues, Questions, and Follow-up:

6. Curriculum: Prevention and Early Intervention-Integrating Health, Nutrition, Mental Health, Safety and Wellness

How does the home visitor help parents:

- Ensure a safe environment?
- Promote health, nutrition and wellness?
- Understand and use health and hygiene practice?

Observe: What are the adults doing? What is the child doing?

Issues, Questions, and Follow-up:

7. Curriculum: Individualizing and Disabilities Services
How do the home visitor and the parent demonstrate:
■ Planning and implementation of experiences that match the child's current developmental level?
■ Understanding of ways to adapt or change activities for the child?
■ Understanding and use of health and hygiene practice?
Observe: What are the adults doing? What is the child doing?
Issues, Questions, and Follow-up:

8. Family Partnerships

How does the home visitor:

- Support positive relationships?
- Respect the home language and culture?
- Encourage parents to get involved in other areas of the Head Start program?
- Support parents in progress towards their goals?

Observe: What are the adults doing? What is the child doing?

Issues, Questions, and Follow-up:

Team Member Summary Worksheet

Summary of Results for Curriculum and Assessment

Areas where the program is working well. Provide examples of program strengths or areas where the program exceeds *Performance Standards*:

_____

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Areas where the program needs improvement:

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Additional areas of concern:

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TEAM LEADER BOOKLET ANALYSIS

Booklet # _____

Booklet Name: _____

Program Strengths	Data Source

Specific Program Weaknesses and Areas to Strengthen	Data Source

Program Self-Assessment Booklet 13

Family and Community Partnerships: Family Partnership Building

Core Question to guide the Self-Assessment team:

How does the grantee engage in a process of collaborative partnership-building with families?

Purpose:

The objective is to support mothers and fathers as they identify and meet their own goals, nurture the development of their children in the context of the family and culture, and advocate for communities that are supportive of children and families of all cultures (Introduction to 1304.40, p. 125).

This booklet will help the Self-Assessment team determine if the program meets Federal *Performance Standards* relating to working with parents. Related *Performance Standards* include: 1304.20(e); 1304.21(a)(2); 1304.23(b)(4); 1304.40; 1304.50(a)(1); 1306.30(b); 1308.19(j); 1308.21.

As you conduct your assessment of the program's services in the area of family partnerships, pay close attention to:

- The approach that the program uses to build a partnership relationship with families
- How staff works with families to identify family goals, strengths, necessary services and supports to formulate a family partnership agreement
- The program staff's knowledge of community resources
- The system the program uses for tracking and follow-up with families
- How the program provides assistance to pregnant women so they can obtain comprehensive prenatal and postpartum care (for Early Head Start programs)
- If the program adopts a broad and inclusive definition of family
- The inclusion of mothers and fathers in meaningful ways

Helpful tools to support data collection in this area follow.

Review:

Ask the Head Start director and/or responsible manager to provide you with access to the following documents:

- A family partnership written plan
- A sample number of family records (In order to maintain confidentiality, only a staff member serving on your Self-Assessment team can review these files)
- A listing of the community resources most commonly used to support families
- Ongoing monitoring reports
- Important data sources relevant to this area such as the *PRISM* report, *PIR* data, Community Assessment, strategic plan or short and long term program goals

Use the questions below to assist your document review.

Has the written plan been updated within the past year to reflect how the program will respond to any new needs of families?

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Is there evidence of the family partnership agreement process in the majority of family files that describe:

⇒ individualized developmental approach ❏ Yes ❏ No

⇒ family goals ❏ Yes ❏ No

⇒ strength-based ❏ Yes ❏ No

⇒ timetables ❏ Yes ❏ No

⇒ strategies for achieving the goals ❏ Yes ❏ No

⇒ progress in achieving goals ❏ Yes ❏ No

⇒ inclusion of fathers ❏ Yes ❏ No

⇒ family driven approach ❏ Yes ❏ No

Do file notes and reports indicate that families are being referred to appropriate resources in the community?

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Do family services staff conduct follow-up with families to determine the quality of services received through Head Start referrals?

❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Is there evidence of family involvement in identifying and participating in appropriate community resources?

❏ Yes   ❏ No   Comment: _____

Do community resource listings include resources for:

⇒ emergency or crisis assistance   ❏ Yes   ❏ No

⇒ counseling services   ❏ Yes   ❏ No

⇒ education and employment training   ❏ Yes   ❏ No

⇒ prenatal health services (Early Head Start)   ❏ Yes   ❏ No

Interview:

The Self-Assessment team member should interview:

- ■ The manager of family partnership services and members of his/her staff
- ■ A number of families
- ■ The Early Head Start manager and staff (if appropriate)

Use the questions below to assist you with interviews:

Questions for managers:

How do you document and monitor family partnership activity to ensure that services are being delivered according to the written plan?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Where do you think you should focus your attention and resources to further improve family partnership services in the program?

_____

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Questions for family partnership staff:

How do you build partnerships with families? What are the first things you do?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Can you describe the process you use for obtaining information on pre-existing plans so that they can be integrated into the Family Partnership Agreement?

_____

_____

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_____

How often do you meet one-on-one with families to review the Family Partnership Agreement, assess progress in attaining goals, and make adjustments?

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_____

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_____

Can you describe any goals you have with families that are related to family literacy? How about goals related to school readiness?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Can you talk about some of the resources that work best for families in this community? How do you find out when resources are not working? Can you name any that are not working? What are you doing about it?

_____

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What are some of the new or emerging needs of the low-income families that you work with? Describe how you are able to assist families in meeting goals in this area.

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_____

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_____

How do you help families transition from Early Head Start and other early care and education programs into Head Start or from Head Start to public school?

_____

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Questions for staff providing Early Head Start services to expectant families:

Describe how you assist pregnant women to access comprehensive prenatal and postpartum health care. Provide one or two examples.

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_____

How does your program provide for prenatal education? What does that education include?

_____

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How does your program include expectant mothers and fathers in services?

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The _Performance Standards_ require programs to provide early and continuing risk assessments. How is that done in this program?

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How does the program educate pregnant women about the benefits of breastfeeding?

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Describe your procedures for transitioning families into a program option after the birth of the child.

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Questions for Head Start and Early Head Start families:

Tell me how you first learned about the family services that Head Start provides.

_____

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Can you describe how you have worked with family services staff throughout the year? What goals have you been working on? How have staff supported you in reaching those goals?

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Questions for Early Head Start expectant families:

Briefly describe the types of services you have received from the Early Head Start program. (Listen for evidence that that the program is honoring family input and providing for risk assessments, timely referrals to community resources for prenatal and postpartum health care as well as mental health services, as appropriate.)

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Other Family Service Considerations

Interview

Ask the manager responsible for coordinating family services:

Are some of your program's families considering marriage or having difficulty with their marriage? If so, what services, either offered directly or by referral, are available? For those families that wish to participate, how do you connect them to these resources?

_____

_____

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_____

How do you talk with parents about issues and concerns that are affecting older siblings of their Head Start children?

_____

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Have you identified supportive services for youth in your community? How do you link older siblings of Head Start children to these resources?

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How do you provide opportunities for young children to get involved with your Head Start program (e.g., reading books to children, volunteering in classroom)?

_____

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Incorporating Relevant Data Sources:

Additional observations, document reviews, or interview questions that this team may choose to add:

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Include any key insights you may have learned from reviewing important data sources such as the *PRISM* report, *PIR* data, Community Assessment, strategic plan or short and long term program goals:

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Team Member Summary Worksheet

Summary of Results for Family Partnership Building

Areas where the program is working well. Provide examples of program strengths or areas where the program exceeds *Performance Standards*:

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Areas where the program needs improvement:

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Additional areas of concern:

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TEAM LEADER BOOKLET ANALYSIS

Booklet # _____

Booklet Name: _____

Program Strengths	Data Source
Specific Program Weaknesses and Areas to Strengthen	Data Source

Program Self-Assessment Booklet 14

Family and Community Partnerships: Parent Involvement

Core Question to guide the Self-Assessment team:

How does the grantee provide parent involvement opportunities in all aspects of the Head Start program?

Purpose:

The objective is to ensure that parents are provided opportunities for growth that reflect their needs, desires and input so they become strong partners in the education of their child.

This booklet will help the Self-Assessment team determine if the program meets Federal *Performance Standards* relating to parent involvement. Related *Performance Standards* include: 1304.20(e)(4); 1304.23(d); 1304.24(a)(1); 1304.40(b)-1304.40(h); 1304.50; 1308.19(j); 1308.21.

As you conduct your assessment of the program's services in the area of parent involvement, pay close attention to:

- How the program promotes parent involvement in each of the service areas: education, mental health, health, nutrition, disabilities, transition and family partnerships
- Information pertaining to opportunities in the program for parent leadership (e.g., Advisory Committee meetings, Policy Council, community partnership activity, etc.)
- The different opportunities that the program offers for families and whether or not they are responsive to the expressed needs of the families they serve
- How the program reaches out to both mothers and fathers whether or not they live together

Helpful tools to support data collection in this area follow.

Observe:

As you spend time in the Head Start program during the Self-Assessment process, take note how parents are involved in the program.

As you enter each center, is the atmosphere warm and inviting to families, including fathers?

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_____

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_____

Are current or former parents serving as volunteers and paid staff?

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_____

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_____

Are parents engaged in group meetings? What are the meetings about?

_____

_____

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_____

Review:

Ask the Head Start director and/or responsible manager to provide you with access to the following documents:

- Sample files to review for documentation of home visits and parent/teacher conferences (only staff serving on Self-Assessment teams are permitted to review files)
- Records of parent involvement activities
- Parent training records and training calendars
- Plan for parent involvement (this may be integrated into other program plans)
- Participation records or referrals for family literacy services
- Community resource directory
- Parent surveys, including identified areas of interest
- Ongoing monitoring reports
- **Important data sources relevant to this area such as the *PRISM* report, *PIR* data, Community Assessment, strategic plan or short and long term program goals**

Use the questions below to assist you in your review:

Is there evidence in child/family records of at least two staff-parent conferences conducted per program year?
❏ Yes　❏ No　Comment: _____

Do you see evidence that the information obtained from families during home visits and parent/teacher conferences influences the services that are provided to children and families?
❏ Yes　❏ No　Comment: _____

In files pertaining to children with disabilities, is there evidence that parents are involved in the process of developing an Individualized Education Plan (IEP)?
❏ Yes　❏ No　Comment: _____

Early Head Start:

In files pertaining to children with disabilities, is there evidence that parents are involved in the process of developing an Individualized Family Services Plan (IFSP)?

❏ Yes　❏ No　Comment: _____

Does the program provide the following opportunities for mothers and fathers:	Yes	No
Opportunities to enhance parenting skills?		
Opportunities for children and families to participate in family literacy services?		
Medical, dental, nutrition and mental health education programs?		
Opportunities to participate in community advocacy?		
Parent involvement and education and employment opportunities responsive to the needs expressed by families?		
Parent involvement in curriculum development?		
Opportunities for families of children with disabilities to recognize their role in advocating for their child?		
Opportunities for parents to learn about rights and responsibilities concerning the education of the child in the school they attend after Head Start?		
Opportunities to participate in Early Head Start to improve skills and knowledge in prenatal education on fetal development, labor and delivery and post-partum recovery?		

Interview:

The Self-Assessment team should attempt to speak with as many program managers as possible, asking each manager how he/she promotes parent involvement in the service areas they manage. Another strategy you may use is to check in with the other Self-Assessment teams charged with reviewing child development, health, nutrition, education, mental health, disabilities and transition services. You can ask for their assistance in assessing the extent to which parent involvement is an integral part of each of these service areas.

As part of your assessment, interview some families, teachers and members of the family services staff. Use the following questions to assist you with interviews:

Questions for each content area specialist (manager):

In what ways are mothers and fathers involved in services for children in the content area that you manage? (Answers should address home visits, health care, curriculum development, nutrition services, disabilities services and transition to/from Head Start.)

_____

_____

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Describe current practices which ensure that parents have a strong voice in planning for the transition of their child into Head Start from Early Head Start or other child care/child development arrangements or from Head Start into elementary school.

_____

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_____

How does the program ensure that parents have opportunities for community advocacy so they can influence services in this community? Can you give me a few examples of community advocacy efforts being supported by this program?

_____

_____

_____

_____

How does the program ensure that opportunities for involvement are responsive to the needs and interests of individual parents (e.g., parents with disabilities, parents whose primary language is not English, working parents, homebound parents, incarcerated parents, non-custodial parents, grandparents, etc.)? Can you share a few examples of the ways you have changed or enhanced the opportunities you offer to families to respond to their changing needs?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What procedure do you follow if parents refuse health care services offered through Head Start?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What procedure do you follow if parents choose not to follow up with recommended treatment or services proposed by the Head Start program (e.g., mental health, health, Individualized Education Plan (IEP))?

_____

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_____

Questions for staff working directly with families:

How do parents find out about the different ways they can get involved?

_____

_____

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What are some of the different opportunities (e.g., learning, community involvement, etc.) that this program offers families?

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Describe your role in connecting families to these different opportunities.

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Questions for mothers and fathers:

Tell me how you learned about some of the various opportunities that Head Start offers to families. Can you name some of them?

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_____

How have you chosen to be involved in Head Start and how has the program benefited your family?

_____

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_____

Have you participated in an end of the year staff-parent meeting to understand the progress your child has made while in Head Start? Did it better prepare you to advocate for your child in public school? If so, how?

_____

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_____

Do you know what to do if you have a complaint?

_____

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_____

Other Parent Involvement Considerations

The following questions are adapted from *Building Block 2, First Thoughts on Getting Dads Involved in Head Start and Building Block 3, Building Your Foundation to Work with Fathers*, Department of Health and Human Services, ACF, ACYF, Head Start Bureau, 2004.

In what ways are fathers an asset to the program?

_____

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_____

Do staff members have an understanding and appreciation for the important role that fathers play in child development? Describe any training and technical assistance they have received regarding father involvement.

_____

_____

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_____

Can you talk about the ways that this program has helped fathers to appreciate the important roles they play in their child's development?

_____

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What steps are being taken to fully involve fathers in the enrollment process? How is information gathered on fathers who do not live with their children?

_____

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_____

Are fathers personally invited and encouraged to participate in the program and given practical ideas for how to participate?

_____

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What are the most common services provided to fathers during the family partnership process? How are these services working?

_____

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_____

Describe some of the key community resources for fathers and the community partnerships that help you to improve services to fathers.

_____

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_____

Question for fathers:

Describe the services that this program offers to you and other fathers.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Document review:

Can you find evidence that staff involve fathers in the family partnership process? Are there specific goals established with fathers?

_____

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Incorporating Relevant Data Sources:

Additional observations, document reviews, or interview questions that this team may choose to add:

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Include any key insights you may have learned from reviewing important data sources such as the *PRISM* report, *PIR* data, Community Assessment, strategic plan or short and long term program goals:

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Team Member Summary Worksheet

Summary of Results for Parent Involvement

Areas where the program is working well. Provide examples of program strengths or areas where the program exceeds *Performance Standards*:

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Areas where the program needs improvement:

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Additional areas of concern:

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TEAM LEADER BOOKLET ANALYSIS

Booklet # _____

Booklet Name: _____

Program Strengths	Data Source

Specific Program Weaknesses and Areas to Strengthen	Data Source

Program Self-Assessment Booklet 15

Family and Community Partnerships: Community and Child Care Partnerships

Core Question to guide the Self-Assessment team:

How does the grantee take an active role in community planning and advocacy to improve the delivery of services to children and families? Is this program engaged in effective child care partnerships?

Purpose:

The objective is to ensure that programs collaborate with partners in their communities in order to provide the highest level of services to children and families, to foster a continuum of family centered services and to advocate for a community that shares responsibility for the healthy development of children and families of all cultures (Introduction to 1304.41, p. 147).

This booklet will help the team assess if the program meets Federal *Performance Standards* relating to developing and maintaining community and child care partnerships. Related *Performance Standards* include: 1304.23(b)(4); 1304.24(a)(3)(iv); 1304.40(e)(4); 1304.41; 1308.4(l)(1)-1308.41(l)(7); 1310.23.

As you conduct your assessment of this program's approach to community partnerships and child care partnerships, pay close attention to:

- How the program goes about developing a plan to guide their partnership activity
- How partnership responsibilities are shared among the managers and staff
- The program's progress in formulating interagency agreements

Helpful tools to support data collection in this area follow.

Review:

Ask the Head Start director and/or responsible manager to provide you with access to the following documents:

- Interagency agreements
- Child care partnership agreements
- The program's plan for community involvement
- Documentation of the program's partnership efforts
- Copies of the program's transition plan
- Ongoing monitoring reports
- Advisory committee rosters and minutes
- **Important data sources relevant to this area such as the *PRISM* report, *PIR* data, Community Assessment, strategic plan or short and long term program goals**

Use the questions below to assist your document review:

Does the program document their community partnership efforts? ❏ Yes   ❏ No

Is there an interagency agreement with local education agencies?   ❏ Yes   ❏ No

If no interagency agreement exists, is there documentation of efforts to establish such an agreement?   ❏ Yes   ❏ No

Is there evidence that the program has on-going collaborative relationships with the following community agencies:	Yes	No
Health care providers?		
Mental health providers?		
Nutritional service providers?		
Providers of services to children with disabilities?		
Family preservation and support services?		
Child protective services?		
Local elementary schools?		
Other educational and cultural institutions (libraries, museums, etc.)?		
Providers of child care services?		
Organizations and businesses that provide transportation services?		
Other organizations and businesses that provide support and resources to mothers, fathers and families?		

Are there procedures in place to facilitate transitions to/from other child care programs and Early Head Start or Head Start, and from Head Start to elementary school?

❏ Yes   ❏ No   Comment: _____

Interview:

Ask your team leader to assist you to connect with:

- Members of the management team who have primary responsibility for overseeing community partnerships
- Community partners
- Child care partners

When interviewing Head Start managers, ask:

How does the program establish and maintain advisory committees to address program issues and to help the program respond to family and community needs?

_____

_____

_____

_____

How does the program coordinate services to children with disabilities and their families with community agencies?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Does the program have relationships with the following community agencies:

Health care providers ❏ Yes ❏ No
Describe the benefits to children and families:

_____

Mental health providers ❏ Yes ❏ No
Describe the benefits to children and families:

_____

Nutritional service providers ❏ Yes ❏ No
Describe the benefits to children and families:

_____

Providers of services to children with disabilities   ❏ Yes   ❏ No
Describe the benefits to children and families:

_____

Family preservation and support services   ❏ Yes   ❏ No
Describe the benefits to children and families:

_____

Child protective services   ❏ Yes   ❏ No
Describe the benefits to children and families:

_____

Local elementary schools   ❏ Yes   ❏ No
Describe the benefits to children and families:

_____

Other educational and cultural institutions (libraries, museums, etc.) ❏ Yes   ❏ No
Describe the benefits to children and families:

_____

Providers of child care services   ❏ Yes   ❏ No
Describe the benefits to children and families:

_____

Organizations and businesses that provide transportation services   ❏ Yes   ❏ No
Describe the benefits to children and families:

_____

Organizations that provide job readiness and employment services   ❏ Yes   ❏ No
Describe the benefits to children and families:

_____

Other organizations and businesses that provide support and resources to families
                                                                         ❏ Yes   ❏ No
Describe the benefits to children and families:

_____

How does the program encourage volunteers to participate in Head Start?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Can you provide examples of how Head Start parents work with staff to improve the quality of services available to children and families?

_____

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_____

Do you have practices in place to coordinate services between this program and other programs that children attend before, after and during their Head Start experience? Please describe.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Do you coordinate joint training with early childhood programs in this community?

_____

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_____

Is there a group in your community working to coordinate transportation and do you participate in it? If not, have you explored the possibility of creating one?

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_____

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_____

For Early Head Start:

How does the program promote the access of children, families and expectant parents to community services that are responsive to their needs?

_____

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_____

Questions for Community Partners:

If possible, see if you can meet and speak with several of the program's community partners (all programs must engage in community partnerships). Four sample interview questions follow:

Could you briefly describe your agency and the services it provides to the community?

_____

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_____

How and why did your agency's partnership with Head Start develop?

_____

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_____

What activities and initiatives are underway as a result of this partnership?

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What do you see as the major effects of this partnership?

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Questions for others:

For members of the Health Services Advisory Committee or other Head Start Advisory Committees: How long have you been a member of the Advisory Committee? What sort of issues has the committee addressed during that time?

_____

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_____

For Local Education Agencies (LEAs) or early intervention programs funded by Part C of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (Part C agencies): How do you work with Head Start to support children with disabilities? What arrangements do you have to assist children and families in their transition from Head Start?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Questions for child care partners:

Tell me about your partnership with Head Start. How did it begin and how is it working?

_____

_____

_____

_____

How does your partnership with Head Start assist in meeting the needs of children and families in this community?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What do you bring to the partnership? What does Head Start bring?

_____

_____

_____

_____

How was the division of responsibilities decided? Is there a written agreement?

_____

_____

_____

_____

How is information shared between agencies? What records are shared? How do you handle confidentiality?

_____

_____

_____

_____

How do you ensure that you are meeting all of the *Head Start Performance Standards*? What kinds of oversight and training does Head Start provide?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Other Community Partnership Considerations

Do you work with faith-based organizations in your community? Describe the nature of any partnership you may have developed.

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Incorporating Relevant Data Sources:

Additional observations, document reviews, or interview questions that this team may choose to add:

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Include any key insights you may have learned from reviewing important data sources such as the *PRISM* report, *PIR* data, Community Assessment, strategic plan or short and long term program goals:

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Team Member Summary Worksheet

Summary of Results for Community and Child Care Partnerships

Areas where the program is working well. Provide examples of program strengths or areas where the program exceeds *Performance Standards*:

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Areas where the program needs improvement:

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Additional areas of concern:

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TEAM LEADER BOOKLET ANALYSIS

Booklet # _____

Booklet Name: _____

Program Strengths	Data Source

Specific Program Weaknesses and Areas to Strengthen	Data Source

Program Self-Assessment Booklet 16

Program Design: Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment and Attendance

Core Question to guide the Self-Assessment team:

How does the grantee approach eligibility, recruitment, selection, enrollment and attendance in an attempt to meet the needs of Head Start-eligible families and in response to the Community Assessment?

Purpose:

The purpose is to ensure that the program is abiding by Federal requirements and procedures for determining eligibility, recruitment, selection, enrollment, and attendance of children.

This booklet will help you to assess if the program meets Federal *Performance Standards* relating to eligibility, recruitment, selection, enrollment and attendance. Related *Performance Standards* include: 1305.3-1305.8; 1308.5

As you conduct your assessment of the program's approach to eligibility, recruitment, selection, enrollment and attendance, pay close attention to:

- How the program determines who in their community is most in need of Head Start services
- The strategies used to recruit children and families who are most in need
- The process used to select children for the program
- How the program ensures full enrollment
- How the program responds to children who are absent

An adapted version of the *PRISM* Income Eligibility Data Collection Form (and its instructions) has been included. Team members may find it to be a helpful tool in assessing the program's selection of eligible children and families. Other helpful tools to support data collection in this area follow.

Review:

Ask the Head Start director and / or responsible manager to provide you with access to the following documents:

- Community Assessment
- Eligibility and selection criteria
- Written information on the recruitment process and the recruitment areas
- Prioritized waiting list of eligible children (Caution: in order to maintain confidentiality, only staff persons serving on your assessment team are able to view this information)
- Attendance records
- Ongoing monitoring reports
- Class lists and home visitor assignments
- **Important data sources relevant to this area such as the *PRISM* report, *PIR* data, strategic plan or short and long term program goals**

Use the questions below to assist your document review:

Does the Community Assessment include the following information about the Early Head Start and/or Head Start geographic area?	Yes	No
Demographic makeup of eligible children (number, where they live, race, ethnicity)		
Community strengths and assets		
Other child care and child development programs that are serving Head Start eligible children (include publicly funded programs)		
Estimated number of children with disabilities (birth to 4 years old), including types and relevant services available		
Data regarding the education, health, nutrition and social service needs of Head Start eligible children and their families		
The education, health, nutrition, and social service needs of Head Start eligible children and their families as defined by families and by institutions in the community that serve young children		
Resources in the community that could be used to address the needs of Head Start eligible children and families, including an assessment of their availability and accessibility		
Summary and analysis of the data collected for the Community Assessment		

Is there evidence that the program uses the information from the Community Assessment to determine the following:

A plan for recruiting eligible families? ❏ Yes ❏ No

Determining selection criteria? ❏ Yes ❏ No

Are there procedures for selecting children based on:

Family income? ❏ Yes ❏ No

Age of the child? ❏ Yes ❏ No

The extent to which a child or family meets program-specific selection criteria? ❏ Yes ❏ No

Are at least 90% of your currently enrolled families living below the poverty guideline?
❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

If a vacancy occurs more than 60 days before the end of the program year, is it filled with another child within 30 days?
❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Does the program regularly calculate average daily attendance? Does the program analyze the causes for absenteeism when the monthly average daily attendance falls below 85%?
❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Is there a waiting list that ranks children according to selection criteria?
❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

In cases where children have four or more unexcused absences, has the program documented its attempt to intervene with family support procedures?
❏ Yes ❏ No Comment: _____

Interview:

One or two members of the Self-Assessment team should interview a number of Head Start families as well as staff persons responsible for the recruitment, selection, and enrollment of Head Start families. In many programs, this responsibility rests with the family services manager and his/her staff.

Questions for families:

How did you find out about Head Start and what was it like for you to get into the program?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Questions for staff:

How do families in your community find out about Head Start? (See if the program uses a variety of strategies to reach out to families; see if the program staff is willing to assist families through the application process.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

Tell me how the decision is made to accept a particular child into the program. (Listen to be sure that there are established criteria used to evaluate applications and that a consistent process is used to make decisions.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

What is the current average daily attendance of your program? What are you doing to address the low attendance if it is below 85%?

_____

_____

_____

_____

How does the program recruit those most in need of Head Start services, including previously underserved populations?

_____

_____

_____

_____

How does your program ensure that at least 10% of those served are children with disabilities? What is your progress in meeting this goal?

_____

_____

_____

_____

How do you assign children to program options offered by your program? (Listen to be sure that options are offered to families in accordance with their needs.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

What is your funded enrollment for children? How many children are currently in the program? How do you maintain the funded enrollment level? Do you fill vacancies as they occur?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Incorporating Relevant Data Sources:

Additional observations, document reviews, or interview questions that this team may choose to add:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Include any key insights you may have learned from reviewing important data sources such as the *PRISM* report, *PIR* data, Community Assessment, strategic plan or short and long term program goals:

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Instructions for Completing the Income Eligibility Data Collection Form
(Adapted from *PRISM* 2005)

The Income Eligibility Data Collection Form is included to support the Head Start Bureau's efforts to identify potential income eligibility-related areas of non-compliance. An adapted version of this form is included here to help the Self-Assessment team conduct a thorough review of a sample of income eligibility determination records.

Note: The Income Eligibility Data Collection form requires the reviewer to examine children's files. Only a staff person may access and review these files based on the program's confidentiality policy.

Data Collection Form Completion:
1. <u>Column A:</u> To facilitate this process, programs should select an appropriate sample of files to review. Programs with actual enrollment of less than 20 should review all of the children's files (e.g., a program with 17 enrolled children should review all 17 files). For actual enrollment of 20-37 children, programs should review a sample of 20 files; for actual enrollment of 38-77 children, programs should review a sample of 25 files; for actual enrollment of 78-597 children, programs should review 30 files; and for actual enrollment of 598 children or more, programs should review a sample of 35 files.

2. <u>Column B:</u> For each child, determine if the program identified the child as income eligible or as part of the program's enrollment from "over-income" families.
    a. For all children identified by the program as income eligible (i.e., from a household that meets the low-income guidelines), enter a Y in column B and proceed to step 3 (column C).
    b. If the child was enrolled as an "over-income" child, note that on the attached form by entering an N in column B. If you enter an N in column B, your work for that specific child's file has been completed and you should proceed to the next file.

3. <u>Column C:</u> Determine if there is a signed statement by a Head Start program employee stating that the child was determined to be income eligible to participate in the program.
    a. If the file contains a signed determination statement, enter a Y in column C and proceed to step 4 (column D).
    b. If the file does not contain a signed determination statement, enter an N in column C. If you enter an N in column C, your work for that specific child's file has been completed and you should proceed to the next file.

4. <u>Column D:</u> Determine if there is additional documentation that was used in verifying and determining the child's income eligibility.
    a. If the file contains additional documentation used to verify the child's income eligibility status, enter a Y in column D and proceed to step 5 (column E).
    b. If the file does not contain additional documentation used to verify the child's

income eligibility status, enter an N in column D. If you enter an N in column D, your work for that specific child's file has been completed and you should proceed to the next file.

5. <u>Column E:</u> Review the documentation used to determine eligibility and make your own determination about the child's eligibility.

   a. If you concur with the program that the child is income eligible (i.e., from a household that meets the low-income guidelines), enter a Y in column E.

   b. If you conclude that the child is not income eligible (i.e., "over-income"), enter an N in column E.

Below are correct and incorrect examples of form completion. Please review these examples before beginning your work.

Example of Correct Data Collection Form Completion:

A	B	C	D	E
	Program has enrolled the child as an income eligible (from a low-income household) child	Reviewer finds a signed statement in folder identifying that eligibility has been verified	Reviewer finds in folder documentation used by the program for determining eligibility	Reviewer supports grantee's determination of income eligibility
File Number	(Y or N)	(Y or N)	(Y or N)	(Y or N)
1	Y	N		
2	N			
3	Y	Y	Y	Y

In the above example, the reviewer correctly stopped working on File Number 1 after entering N in column C. Also, the reviewer correctly filled out the form by leaving the rest of the columns blank after writing N in column B for File Number 2. For File Number 3, the reviewer filled in all four columns because every column had a Y in them. This example demonstrates the correct completion of the form because once an N is entered into a column, the reviewer should stop work for that file and move on to begin work on the next file.

Example of <u>Incorrect</u> Data Collection Form Completion:

A	B	C	D	E
	Program has enrolled the child as an income eligible (from a low-income household) child	Reviewer finds a signed statement in folder identifying that eligibility has been verified	Reviewer finds in folder documentation used by the program for determining eligibility	Reviewer supports grantee's determination of income eligibility
File Number	(Y or N)	(Y or N)	(Y or N)	(Y or N)
1	Y	Y	N	Y

In the above example, the reviewer should have stopped work on File Number 1 after entering N in column D. Since there is no additional documentation verifying income eligibility, it would be impossible for the reviewer to make a determination of support for the grantee's initial determination of income eligibility. Therefore, column E should have been left blank and the reviewer would begin work on File Number 2.

Income Eligibility Data Collection Form

Actual enrollment: _____

Number of files to be reviewed: _____

A	B	C	D	E
File Number	Program has enrolled the child as an income eligible (from a low-income household) child (Y or N)	Reviewer finds a signed statement in folder identifying that eligibility has been verified (Y or N)	Reviewer finds in folder documentation used by the program for determining eligibility (Y or N)	Reviewer supports grantee's determination of income eligibility (Y or N)
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				
16				
17				
18				

A	B	C	D	E
	Program has enrolled the child as an income eligible (from a low-income household) child	Reviewer finds a signed statement in folder identifying that eligibility has been verified	Reviewer finds in folder documentation used by the program for determining eligibility	Reviewer supports grantee's determination of income eligibility
File Number	(Y or N)	(Y or N)	(Y or N)	(Y or N)
19				
20				
21				
22				
23				
24				
25				
26				
27				
28				
29				
30				
31				
32				
33				
34				
35				

Team Member Summary Worksheet

Summary of Results for Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment and Attendance

Areas where the program is working well. Provide examples of program strengths or areas where the program exceeds *Performance Standards*:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Areas where the program needs improvement:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Additional areas of concern:

_____

_____

_____

_____

TEAM LEADER BOOKLET ANALYSIS

Booklet # _____

Booklet Name: _____

Program Strengths	Data Source

Specific Program Weaknesses and Areas to Strengthen	Data Source

Program Self-Assessment Booklet 17

Program Design: Facilities, Materials, Equipment, and Transportation

Core Question to guide the Self-Assessment team:

How does the grantee ensure that the facilities, materials, equipment and transportation services are supportive of learning and reflective of different ages and stages of development of each child including children with disabilities, and that appropriate space is provided for the conduct of all program activities?

Purpose:

The objective is to ensure that Head Start's physical environment and transportation services supports the delivery of high quality services to all children and families. This booklet will help the Self-Assessment team to determine if the program meets Federal *Performance Standards* relating to facilities, materials, equipment and transportation. Related *Performance Standards* include: 1304.21(a)(4)(iv); 1304.21(a)(5)-1304.21(a)(6); 1304.22(e)(7);1304.23(e); 1304.53(a)(1)-1304.53(a)(5); 1304.53(a)(7)-1304.53(a)(9); 1304.53(a)(10)(iv); 1304.53(a)(10)(xiv)-1304.53(a)(10)(xv); 1304.53(a)(10)(xvii); 1304.53(b); 1306.30(c); 1308.4(o)(4)-1308.4(o)(6); 1310.10; 1310.12(b); 1310.13-1310.15(b); 1310.15(d); 1310.20; 1310.22(b); 1310.23; 45 CFR 84.5

As you conduct your assessment of the program's facilities, materials, equipment, and transportation, pay close attention to how:

- Inspections, maintenance and repairs are carried out
- The need for materials and equipment is determined and how they are ordered
- Programs comply with all relevant Federal, state, and local requirements regarding facilities and transportation vehicles

Adapted versions of the *PRISM* Health and Safety Checklist, and Transportation Services Checklist have been included. Team members may find them to be helpful tools in assessing the program's facilities, materials, equipment and transportation services. Other helpful tools to support data collection in this area follow.

Review:

Ask the Head Start director and/or responsible manager to provide you with access to the following licenses, inspections and other documents:

- Child care
- Sanitation
- Fire/safety
- Food handlers
- Other locally required licenses
- Ongoing monitoring reports
- Vehicle maintenance logs
- **Important data sources relevant to this area such as the *PRISM* report, *PIR* data, Community Assessment, strategic plan or short and long term program goals**

In addition, ask your team leader to provide you with copies of the following policies and procedures and check the appropriate box:

	Available and current	Not available	Comment
Medication administration			
Short-term exclusion for health reasons			
Emergency procedures			
Child abuse/neglect reporting procedures			
Equipment and vehicle maintenance logs			

Observe:

The Self-Assessment team member should visit a number of centers and classrooms (including family child care homes) and complete the attached Health and Safety Checklist and the Transportation Services Checklist. Share your results with the team administering the booklet on Prevention and Early Intervention. The checklist results will also assist them in their work.

Interview:

The Self-Assessment team member should interview management staff responsible for facilities and materials. Use the questions below to assist you with interviews:

How do you make sure that the program's facilities, materials, equipment, and transportation services are appropriate for the children you serve?

_____

_____

_____

_____

How do you make sure that the program's facilities, materials, equipment and transportation services are appropriate for children with disabilities?

_____

_____

_____

_____

When choosing a facility, what things do you consider?

_____

_____

_____

_____

How do you ensure that the facilities, materials and equipment are accessible and useful to persons with disabilities?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Besides classroom space, what are the other uses for space in your Head Start facilities?

_____

_____

_____

_____

How do you ensure that arrangements and space, as well as types and uses of materials and equipment support the curriculum?

_____

_____

_____

_____

How do you ensure that facilities are free of toxins such as smoke, lead, pesticides and herbicides?

_____

_____

_____

_____

How do you ensure that required inspections, maintenance and repairs are taking place and the facility is in compliance with all other relevant Federal, state, tribal and local requirements?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Incorporating Relevant Data Sources:

Additional observations, document reviews, or interview questions that this team may choose to add:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Include any key insights you may have learned from reviewing important data sources such as the *PRISM* report, *PIR* data, Community Assessment, strategic plan or short and long term program goals:

_____

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_____

Health and Safety Checklist

Place a check in the box when you observe evidence of each of the items listed. Describe any problems or concerns you witness in the comment section.

Note: duplicate this page if your team is assessing more than four classrooms.

For Early Head Start Infant/Toddler classrooms only:

	Classrooms			
1. Sanitation and hygiene procedures for diapering have been adopted that adequately protect health and safety of children served by the program and staff. [1304.22(e)(5)]				
2. The diaper-changing area is located away from areas used for cooking, eating, or children's activities. [1304.53(a)(10)(xiv)]				
3. Diapers are disposed of in a safe and sanitary manner. [1304.53(a)(10)(xvi)]				
4. Infant sleeping arrangements use firm mattresses and avoid soft bedding materials such as comforters, pillows, fluffy blankets or stuffed toys. [1304.53(b)(3)]				
5. Cribs are at least three feet apart from each other. [1304.22(e)(7)]				
6. Infant toys are made of non-toxic materials and are sanitized regularly. [1304.53(b)(2)]				
7. Toilet training equipment is available for children being toilet trained. [1304.53(a)(10)(xv)]				

Comments:

All Classrooms

Classrooms

1. Nonporous gloves are available for use when dealing with bloody bodily fluids. [1304.22(e)(3)]

2. Staff promote effective dental hygiene among children in conjunction with meals. [1304.23(b)(3)]

3. Toys are stored in a "safe and orderly fashion" (e.g., in their assigned places, not out where people can trip over them). [1304.53(b)(1)(vii)]

4. The indoor and outdoor space for infants and toddlers is separated from general walkways and areas used by preschoolers. [1304.53(a)(4)]

5. Toys, materials and furniture are safe, durable, and kept in good condition (e.g., materials free of sharp edges and loose pieces, balloons and/or plastic bags not used; no choking hazards. Cribs are at least three feet apart from each other). [1304.53(b)(1)(vi)] [1304.22(e)(7)]

6. Center space is organized into functional areas that can be recognized by children and that allow for individual activities and social interactions. [1304.53(a)(3)]

7. Staffing patterns support regulations regarding class size and number of adults per class. [1306.20]

8. Staff, volunteers and children wash their hands with soap and running water after diapering or toilet use, before food-related activities, whenever hands are contaminated with blood or other bodily fluids, after handling pets or other animals. Staff and volunteers wash their hands with soap and running water before and after giving medications, before and after treating or bandaging a wound and after assisting a child with toilet use. [1304.22(e)(1)-(2)]

Comments:

Indoor Facilities

	Classrooms				
1. Facilities are available for the proper storage and handling of breast milk and formula. [1304.23(e)(2)]					
2. Bathroom facilities are clean, in good repair and easily reached by children. [1304.53(a)(10)(xiv)]					
3. Bathroom facilities are separated from areas used for cooking, eating or children's activities. [1304.53(a)(10)(xiv)]					
4. Indoor and outdoor premises are cleaned daily and kept free of undesirable and hazardous materials and conditions. [1304.53(a)(10)(viii)]					
5. Garbage and trash are stored and disposed of in a safe, sanitary manner. [1304.53(a)(10)(xvi)]					
6. A separate utility sink is specifically used to clean potties. [1304.22(e)(6)]					
7. For EHS, cribs are spaced at least three feet apart. [1304.22(e)(7)]					
8. Accommodations for nursing mothers who visit classrooms/participate in activities. [1304.40(c)(3)]					

Comments:

Safety

Classrooms					
1. The facility has approved, working fire extinguishers and an appropriate number of smoke detectors that are tested regularly. [1304.53(a)(10)(v), 1304.53(a)(10)(vi)]					
2. Windows and glass doors are constructed, adapted or adjusted to prevent injury to children. [1304.53(a)(10)(xii)]					
3. Electrical outlets accessible to children are covered. [1304.53(a)(10)(xi)]					
4. The heating/cooling system is insulated to protect children and staff from potential burns. [1304.53(a)(10)(i)]					
5. There is an absence of highly flammable furnishings, decorations, or materials that emit toxic fumes. [1304.53(a)(10)(ii)]					
6. Flammable and other dangerous materials/poisons are stored in locked cabinets or facilities separate from medications and food and accessible only to authorized persons. [1304.53(a)(10)(iii)]					
7. Appropriate licenses (water/sewage, food/sanitation, fire codes, transportation, and vendor/contractor licenses) are seen. [1304.53(a)(6) and (10)(xiii), 1304.23(e)(1), 1306.30(c)]					

Comments:

Facility Layout and Environment

	Classrooms				
1. If necessary, there is a safe and effective heating and cooling system. [1304.53(a)(10)(i)]					
2. There is at least 35 sq. ft. of usable indoor space (i.e., not including bathrooms, halls, kitchens, staff rooms, and storage places) per child. [1304.53(a)(5)]					
3. Facilities enable the safe and effective participation of children with disabilities. [1308.4(o)(4)]					
4. Rooms are well lit. [1304.53(a)(10)(iv)]					
5. Garbage and trash are stored and disposed of in a safe, sanitary manner. [1304.53(a)(10)(xvi)]					

Comments:

Provision for Emergencies

Classrooms

1. Exits and/or evacuation routes are clearly marked. [1304.22(a)(3), 1304.53(a)(10)(vii)]					
2. Emergency lighting is available. [1304.53(a)(10)(iv)]					
3. Emergency telephone numbers (e.g., EMS, Fire, Police, Poison Control) are clearly posted. [1304.22(a)(2)]					
4. Policies and plans of action that require rapid response for emergencies on the part of staff (e.g., a child choking) or immediate medical or dental attention are clearly posted. [1304.22(a)(1)]					
5. A well-supplied first-aid kit is available, accessible to staff, and out of reach of children. [1304.22(f)(1)]					

Comments:

Medication Administration

	Classrooms			
1. All medications are properly labeled (i.e., name of child/staff, name of medication, dosage, name/number of pharmacy/physician). [1304.22(c)(1)]				
2. Medications are under lock and key and out of reach of children. [1304.53(a)(10)(iii), 1304.22(c)(1)]				
3. Medications in need of refrigeration are refrigerated. [1304.22(c)(1)]				

Comments:

Outdoors

	Classrooms			
1. There is at least 75 sq. ft. of usable outdoor space per child. [1304.53(a)(5)]				
2. The playground equipment is in good repair and safe condition (e.g., adequately secured to the ground, free of sharp edges and/or splinters, soft falling surface). [1304.53(a)(7) 1304.53(a)(10)(viii) 1304.53(a)(10)(x)]				
3. The outdoor play area is arranged such that no child can leave the premises or get into unsafe or unsupervised areas. [1304.53(a)(9)]				

Comments:

Transportation Services Checklist

(Adapted form *PRISM '05*)

Reviewer _____ **Date/Time** _____

Other Sources of Information Used _____

Instructions for Completing the Transportation Services Checklist

The information gathered will be based on bus ride(s), interviews, observations, and document reviews.

The checklist has been numbered for easy reference and separated into four categories:

- Facilities, Materials, Equipment and Transportation (Questions 1-13)
- Early Childhood Development and Health Services (Questions 14-22)
- Family and Community Partnerships (Questions 23-27)
- Program Design and Management (Questions 28-40)

The questions marked with ◆ apply to all Head Start grantees and their delegates, whether they provide transportation services or not. These items appear in questions 13-15, 17, and 26-30.

The questions marked with may be observed on bus ride(s).

Facilities, Materials, Equipment, and Transportation

Yes   No

—   —   1.   Each vehicle used in providing transportation services has:

- a communication system to call for assistance;

- emergency safety equipment, including a charged fire extinguisher properly mounted near the driver's seat and a sign indicating its location;

- a first aid kit and a sign indicating its location; and

- a seat belt cutter and a sign indicating its location. [1310.10(d)(1-4)]

—   —   2.   Any auxiliary seating used in vehicles providing transportation services has been built into the vehicle by the manufacturer as part of its standard design, maintained in proper working order, and inspected annually. [1310.10(e)]

—   —   3.   Baggage and other items transported in the passenger compartment are properly stored and secured, aisles remain clear, and doors and emergency exits are unobstructed at all times. [1310.15(b)]

—   —   4.   There are procedures in place to ensure that the bus or alternative allowable vehicle is maintained in safe operating condition. The organization operating the vehicle has established and implemented procedures for:

- an annual safety inspection through an inspection program licensed or operated by the State;

- systematic preventive maintenance; and

- a daily pre-trip inspection by the driver. [1304.53(a)(7), 1310.13]

—   —   5.   Each vehicle is not required to back up or make "U" turns, except if necessary for safety reasons or because of physical barriers. [1310.20(b)(3)]

—   —   6.   Trip stops minimize traffic disruptions and afford the driver a good field of view in front and behind the vehicle. [1310.20(b)(4)]

Facilities, Materials, Equipment, and Transportation (cont.)

Yes   No

7. There are specific procedures for use of alternate routes in the case of hazardous conditions that could affect the safety of the children who are being transported. [1310.20(b)(7)]

8. Transit times for children going to and from the program do not exceed one hour each way unless there is no shorter route available or any alternative shorter route is either unsafe or impractical. [1310.20(b)(1)]

9. When possible, stops do not require children to cross the street or highway when boarding or exiting the vehicle. [1310.20(b)(5)]

10. If children must cross the street before boarding or after leaving the vehicle, the children are escorted across the street by the bus monitor or another adult. [1310.20(b)(6)]

11. The number of occupants in the vehicle does not exceed maximum passenger capacity at any time. [1310.20(b)(2)]

12. All vehicle occupants (except for the bus monitors who are assisting children) are seated in height- and weight-appropriate restraint systems while the vehicle is in motion. [1310.15(a), 1310.15(d)]
   Exception: Approval letter from the Head Start Bureau is required for an extension of the effective date of the portion of the Head Start regulation relating to child safety restraint systems up to January 20, 2006.

13. ◆ Children are only released to a parent, legal guardian, or other individual as designated in writing by the parent or legal guardian. The agency maintains lists of the persons, including alternates in case of emergency, and up-to-date child rosters are maintained at all times to ensure that no child is left behind, either at the classroom or on the vehicle at the end of the route. [1310.10(g)]

Comments:

Early Childhood Development and Health Services

Yes   No

_____   _____   14.   ◆ Children receive developmentally appropriate safety training within 30 days of the start of the program year on:

- safe riding practices;
- safety procedures for boarding and leaving the vehicle;
- safety procedures in crossing the streets to and from the vehicle at stops;
- recognition of danger zones around the vehicle; and
- emergency evacuation procedures, including participation in an emergency evacuation drill conducted on the vehicle the child will be riding. [1310.21(a), 1310.21(b)(1)–(5)]

_____   _____   15.   ◆ Children's safety training reminder activities have been developed and are developmentally appropriate, individualized, and an integral part of program activities. [1310.21(e)]

_____   _____   16.   At least two bus evacuation drills in addition to the one required to be provided within the first thirty days of service have been conducted during each program year. [1310.21(b)(5), 1310.21(d)]

_____   _____   17.   ◆ Grantee and delegate agencies have arranged for or provide transportation for children with disabilities to and from the program and to special clinics or other service providers when the special education and related services cannot be provided on-site. [1308.4(h)(6), 1310.22(b)]

_____   _____   18.   Up-to-date family contact information and authorization for emergency care for each child is readily available. [1304.22(a)(2), 1304.51(g)]

_____   _____   19.   Appropriate staff is informed of any health or safety accommodations or adaptations needed for children in accordance with the program's confidentiality policy. [1304.22(b)(3)]

Early Childhood Development and Health Services (cont.)

Yes   No

_____ _____ 20. The agency must establish, maintain, and implement written procedures regarding the administration, handling, and storage of medication for every child. [1304.22(c)]

_____ _____ 21. Bus drivers and monitors encourage self-control by using positive methods of child guidance by setting clear, consistent limits. [1304.21(a)(3)(i)(C), 1304.52(h)(1)(iv)]

_____ _____ 22. Routines and transitions occur in a timely, predictable, and unrushed manner according to each child's needs. [1304.21(a)(3)(ii)]

Comments::

Family and Community Partnerships

Yes   No

___ ___ 23. Effective two-way communication between staff and parents is facilitated on a regular basis throughout the program year. [1304.51(c)(1)]

___ ___ 24. Interactions with families are respectful. [1304.40(a)(5)]

___ ___ 25. Communication with parents is conducted in the parents' primary or preferred language or through an interpreter, to the extent feasible. [1304.40(a)(5)]

___ ___ 26. ◆ Parents receive safety training within 30 days of the start of the program year that:
  • emphasizes the importance of escorting their children to the vehicle stop and reinforcing the vehicle safety training.
  • complements the training provided to their children so that safety practices can be reinforced both in the program and at home by the parent. [1310.21(a), 1310.21(c)]

___ ___ 27. ◆ Reasonable efforts are made to coordinate transportation resources with other human services agencies in the community. [1310.23(a)]

Comments:

Program Design and Management

Yes   No

—   —   28. ◆ The agency assists as many families as possible who need transportation in order for their children to attend the program in obtaining that transportation. [1310.10(a)]

—   —   29. ◆ The specific types of transportation assistance being offered are made clear to all prospective families in the program's recruitment announcements. [1310.10(b)]

—   —   30. ◆ If the agency has decided not to provide transportation services, either for all or a portion of the children, the agency provides reasonable assistance to the families of such children to arrange transportation to and from its activities. [1310.10(b)]

—   —   31. If the agency provides transportation through an arrangement with another organization or individual, the agency has ensured compliance of the transportation provider with the Head Start regulations. [1310.10(c)]

—   —   32. Each vehicle purchased after February 20, 2001 is a school bus or an allowable alternate vehicle equipped for use of height- and weight-appropriate child safety restraint systems and with a reverse beeper. [1310.10(c)]

—   —   33. All accidents involving transportation services are reported in accordance with applicable State requirements. [1310.10(f)]

—   —   34. Where available in the State or jurisdiction, each driver has a valid Commercial Driver's License (CDL) for vehicles in the same class as the vehicle the driver operates. [1310.16(a)(1)]

—   —   35. In accordance with the applicant review procedures, bus drivers' driving records have been checked through the appropriate State agency, including the National Driver Register, if available in the State. [1310.16(b)(2)]

Program Design and Management (cont.)

Yes   No

___ ___ 36. Each bus driver has received a combination of classroom and behind-the-wheel training prior to transporting any child enrolled in the agency's program, and refresher training annually, on how to:

• operate the vehicle safely and efficiently;

• safely run a fixed route, including loading and unloading children, stopping at railroad crossings and performing other specialized driving maneuvers;

• administer basic first aid;

• handle emergency situations, including vehicle evacuation procedures;

• operate any special equipment, such as wheelchair lifts, assistance devices or special occupant restraints;

• conduct routine vehicle maintenance and safety checks; and

• maintain accurate records as necessary. [1310.17(a), 1310.17(b)(1)-(7)]

___ ___ 37. Bus drivers receive annual evaluations, which must include an on-board observation of road performance. [1310.17(f)(1)]

___ ___ 38. At least one bus monitor is on board at all times. [1310.15(c)]

Exception: Approval letter from the Head Start Bureau is required for an extension of the effective date of the portion of the Head Start regulation relating to bus monitors up to January 20, 2006.

Program Design and Management (cont.)

Yes   No

___   ___   39.   Each bus monitor has been trained prior to duty on:

• child boarding and exiting procedures;

• use of child restraint systems;

• any required paperwork;

• responses to emergencies;

• emergency evacuation procedures;

• use of special equipment;

• child pick-up and release procedures;

• pre- and post-trip vehicle check. [1310.17(f)(2)]

Exception: Approval letter from the Head Start Bureau is required for an extension of the effective date of the portion of the Head Start regulation relating to bus monitors up to January 20, 2006.

___   ___   40.   Each agency has identified the true cost of providing transportation in order to knowledgeably compare the costs of providing transportation directly versus contracting for the service. [1310.23(b)(1)]

Comments:

Team Member Summary Worksheet

Summary of Results for Facilities, Materials, Equipment, and Transportation

Areas where the program is working well. Provide examples of program strengths or areas where the program exceeds *Performance Standards*:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Areas where the program needs improvement:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Additional areas of concern:

_____

_____

_____

_____

TEAM LEADER BOOKLET ANALYSIS

Booklet # _____

Booklet Name: _____

Program Strengths	Data Source

Specific Program Weaknesses and Areas to Strengthen	Data Source

Program Self-Assessment Booklet 18

Using Child Outcomes in Program Self-Assessment

Core Question to guide the Self-Assessment team:

Does the program have an effective system for measuring child outcomes that informs program leaders of patterns of progress for three to five year old children and how the program might be improved?

Purpose:

The purpose is to ensure that programs have a system for measuring child outcomes and using the results to plan for continuous program improvements.

This booklet will help the Self-Assessment team determine if the program has responded to program outcomes as outlined in Section 641A(b) of the *Head Start Reauthorization Act* of 1998 and related guidance that appears in ACYF-IM-HS-00-03 and ACYF-IM-00-18. These IM's address:

- Head Start Child Outcomes Framework
- Timelines for Implementation and Program Monitoring

Related *Performance Standards* include: 1304.21(a)(1)(i); 1304.40(e)(5); 1304.51(a)(1)(ii)-1304.51(a)(1)(iii); 1304.51(g); 1304.51(i)(1)-1304.51(i)(2); Head Start Act, Sections: 641A(a)(1)(B); 641A(b)(4); 642(e); 648A(a)(1)(A).

As you conduct your assessment of the program's outcome measurement system, pay close attention to the:

- Effectiveness of the system in demonstrating patterns of progress for three to five year old children participating in the program
- Conclusions and results of the program's analysis of information on child outcomes

Helpful tools to support data collection in this area follow.

Review:

Ask the Head Start director and/or responsible manager to provide you with access to the following documents:

The Self-Assessment team member should review:

- Child assessment instruments
- Written plans that have been revised to include information on measuring child outcomes
- Written procedures describing methods for data collection, data analysis and how child outcome information will be used in program planning
- Sample data collection reports
- Report of child outcome data analysis
- Ongoing monitoring reports
- Staff training and development plans
- **Important data sources relevant to this area such as the *PRISM* report, *PIR* data, Community Assessment, strategic plan or short and long term program goals**

Use the following checklist to guide your document review:

Do written plans reflect responsibilities associated with collecting, analyzing and utilizing child outcome data?

❏ Yes   ❏ No

Comment: _____

_____

Are child outcome responsibilities reflected in management systems such as program planning, record keeping and reporting, Self-Assessment, ongoing monitoring and human resources as well as in service areas?

❏ Yes   ❏ No

Comment: _____

_____

Do child assessment procedures and the instruments used by the program address, at a minimum, the eight domain areas and the thirteen required indicators listed in the *Child Outcomes Framework*?

❏ Yes   ❏ No

Comment: _____

_____

Is there evidence that the program staff measure children's progress, at a minimum, in the beginning, middle, and end of the year?

❏ Yes   ❏ No

Comment: _____

_____

Does the program have a system for recording the results of child outcome measurement so they can be analyzed effectively? Can the reports be used to identify patterns of progress for children?

❏ Yes   ❏ No

Comment: _____

_____

Do program long-range goals and short-term objectives reflect the findings of ongoing monitoring and the Self-Assessment, including analysis and use of child outcome data?

❏ Yes   ❏ No

Comment: _____

_____

Interview:

The Self-Assessment team member should interview the Head Start director, members of the management team, and other program leaders involved in the child outcome measurement system.

Questions you may use to guide your interview:

Describe your systems for collecting child outcome data and ongoing monitoring to track patterns of progress and accomplishments.

_____

_____

_____

_____

What process is used by program managers and leaders to analyze data collected during outcome measurement?

_____

_____

_____

_____

How is the child outcome data analysis information shared with the governing body, Policy Council and other stakeholders?

_____

_____

_____

_____

How has the program used the child outcome data analysis information in planning for continuous improvement in the following areas:

Services for individual children?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Strengthening individual classrooms?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Identifying staff training and professional development needs?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Program planning?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Does analysis and use of ongoing assessment data include attention to the progress of different groups of children such as English language learners and children who enter Head Start with different levels of knowledge and skills?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Are there examples of "mid-course corrections" in curriculum, teaching and other child development services occurring based on review of ongoing assessment information at the beginning and mid-points of the program year?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Does analysis of child outcomes information incorporate comparison of trends from past years to highlight patterns of continuity, new areas of need or concern, or enhanced progress of children?

_____

_____

_____

_____

How do you include all children in your process, including children with disabilities?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Is your program measuring outcomes in areas other than those that are mandated (e.g., family outcomes)? Describe which ones.

❏ Yes   ❏ No

Comment: _____

_____

_____

_____

Special Instructions:

Review the results of the program's outcome data analysis. Include this information with your booklet summary so that the Self-Assessment leadership team can use this information in planning program improvements.

Incorporating Relevant Data Sources:

Additional observations, document reviews, or interview questions that this team may choose to add:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Include any key insights you may have learned from reviewing important data sources such as the *PRISM* report, *PIR* data, Community Assessment, strategic plan or short and long term program goals:

_____

_____

_____

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_____

_____

_____

Team Member Summary Worksheet

Summary of Results for Using Child Outcomes in Program Self-Assessment

Areas where the program is doing well. Provide examples of program strengths or areas where the program exceeds *Performance Standards*:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Areas where the program needs improvement:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Additional areas of concern:

_____

_____

_____

_____

TEAM LEADER BOOKLET ANALYSIS

Booklet # _____

Booklet Name: _____

Program Strengths	Data Source

Specific Program Weaknesses and Areas to Strengthen	Data Source

Stage 3: Interpreting the Information

Overview

Key participants in Stage 3 include:

Your designated team of managers and program leaders who are charged with leading the process, analyzing the information, and incorporating the results into program improvement efforts. In addition, your assigned TA specialist is available to support the work of the team as you interpret the information collected through your Self-Assessment. You may also want to seek input from and share key findings with program leaders, staff and other Head Start stakeholders.

In this stage you will:

- Review and further analyze all of the summary materials generated by each of the Self-Assessment teams

- Examine program strengths and accomplishments

- Analyze and interpret areas to strengthen

- Display the data in a useful manner

- Identify underlying causes and systemic issues

- Classify and prioritize health and safety concerns

- Classify and prioritize short-term improvements

- Classify and prioritize long-term improvements

Stage 3: Interpreting the Information

Interpreting the Information You Have Collected

After completing Stage 2, *Collecting and Synthesizing the Information,* you will find that your Self-Assessment teams have generated a great deal of information and data. A significant amount of effort went into completing each booklet, with notes reflecting the results of observations, document reviews, surveys, and interviews.

In this stage, the Self-Assessment leadership team will review, process and make sense of this information. This is one of the most challenging, yet critical, steps in the Self-Assessment process. This information analysis is necessary to draw meaning from the data that was gathered and compare existing program practice with *Head Start Performance Standards*.

Analysis of information requires:

- consolidating the data into a more manageable size
- displaying the data in a useful manner
- uncovering underlying causes, including systemic issues
- classifying and prioritizing the information

You have already begun the process of analysis in Stage 2 by having Self- Assessment team leaders consolidate the information into Booklet Analyses. At this point, it is necessary to further consolidate the data and display it in a way that enables you to identify weaknesses, and determine underlying causes and systemic issues. This process will enable you to gain insight and draw reasonable conclusions from the data, which is necessary for the development of your Program Improvement Plan and your Training and Technical Assistance Plan in Stage 4.

Examining Strengths

Before turning your attention to the concerns and needs that emerged from the Self-Assessment process, take time to identify and document the key strengths and accomplishments of the program. Take stock of the information regarding strengths that appears in the Booklet Analyses prepared by team leaders. Focus on new accomplishments, exceptional strengths or other areas that exceed the *Head Start Program Performance Standards*, and record the information on the following **Program Strengths Worksheet.**

The information you record will inform your work in Stage 4 by providing a broader program context. To support continuous quality improvement, you will need to draw upon the strengths of the program in order to develop and support new strategies to improve outcomes for children and families. This information should also be included in any Self-Assessment summary reports you prepare for the staff, families, Policy Council, governing body, and the greater community. These reports will provide a balanced program perspective so that others are aware of the good work you do.

Program Strengths Worksheet

Record the key strengths and significant achievements that you want to share with others and build upon in the future.

Key Strengths and Achievements

Analysis and Interpretation

Analyzing information is a complex process. Analysis of data needs to be conducted in a systematic and logical way so that information can be reviewed and processed, and reasonable and reliable conclusions can be drawn. While some problems are readily identifiable, others may not be as obvious. In addition, while some issues may be limited to specific program functions or segments, others may be more overarching. The identification of problems, the determination as to whether they are contained or systemic, and the formation of conclusions about their underlying causes, will form the basis for developing the Program Improvement Plan and the T/TA Plan.

Displaying the Data

There are many different methods for the analysis of Self-Assessment information and data. As the purpose of the Head Start Self-Assessment process is to assure consistency with the *Performance Standards* and help programs strive for excellence, a method that has proven especially effective for Head Start programs is the use of the *PRISM* Framework. This framework, a matrix of all eighteen systems and services contained in the *Head Start Program Performance Standards*, provides a tool to display the information from the Booklet Analyses and identify systems and services needing improvement.

The *PRISM* Framework: Analysis of Areas to Strengthen is included on page 11 to assist programs in organizing and displaying their Self-Assessment data to determine areas of contained weaknesses, patterns of identified needs and systemic issues.

Take each of the specific program weaknesses and areas to strengthen that appear in the Booklet Analyses and use the *PRISM* Framework to determine the relevant service and system. Once you have made your decision, record the information in the corresponding square. Some programs use sticky notes to physically place each item onto the corresponding square on the grid. This will provide a picture or map of all the identified weaknesses and can assist you to identify any patterns within or across individual systems and service areas.

The sample *PRISM* Framework on page 13 shows examples of specific areas to be strengthened that are mapped onto the grid. For example, the Self-Assessment data may have demonstrated a lack of follow-up on recorded changes in children's behavior while on medication. This need would be mapped onto the grid along the system of *Record-Keeping and Reporting* and under the services of *Prevention and Early Intervention.*

Issues that have been identified through the Self-Assessment process may reflect contained areas of weaknesses, or they may reflect larger systemic problems. The *PRISM* Framework is a useful tool to help you visually display both isolated areas of weaknesses as well as systemic issues within or across particular systems and service areas.

Underlying Causes

Once you have displayed all the information onto the *PRISM* Framework, take time to review the weaknesses that you have identified. For each area to strengthen, you will need to uncover the underlying cause(s). Identifying these underlying causes will facilitate the development of appropriate and effective strategies to strengthen program systems and services.

To uncover underlying causes, it may be necessary to refer back to the information collected in each of the 18 Self-Assessment booklets. In addition, members of the Self-Assessment teams may be able to provide insight and clarification based on their review of particular program and service areas. Examples of common underlying causes include: lack of knowledge in a particular area; inadequate supervision and support for staff; and inadequate documentation systems (forms, communication mechanisms, tracking systems, etc) in place to facilitate and record the process or service.

Contained Areas of Weaknesses

Some items displayed on the *PRISM* Framework are contained problems that do not reflect larger systemic issues. For each of these items, the leadership team should review the information collected in Stage 2, as well as other relevant program documents and records to uncover the underlying causes.

In **Example A** on page 15, the issue of under-enrollment has been identified as a contained area of weakness. In order to develop effective strategies to address this issue, it is essential to uncover the underlying problems that have caused the under-enrollment. Underlying causes may include, but are not limited to: changes in community demographics, problems in the program's recruitment system, lack of transportation, lack of availability and accessibility of services, inappropriate program options to meet families' needs, or poor program reputation within the community.

Patterns and Systemic Issues

The *PRISM* Framework display may also demonstrate an underlying systemic problem within specific management systems and service areas. As your program's management systems exist to support program services, a breakdown in a key management system may result in negative effects in a particular program area or across multiple program service areas. A pattern of multiple issues within a particular system (along one row of the grid) often points to an underlying systemic issue. Similarly, multiple weaknesses within one service area (within one column of the grid) may indicate a significant problem in that particular service area. Identifying such patterns will help programs plan effective strategies to improve and strengthen management systems and program service areas.

In the sample *PRISM* Framework grid provided on page 13, multiple weaknesses have been mapped onto the system of *Record-Keeping and Reporting* and the service area of *Parent Involvement*. When patterns such as these emerge, programs must investigate these areas to uncover underlying causes of these systemic issues.

In **Example B** on page 16, Program XYZ has identified weaknesses within their system of *Record-Keeping and Reporting*. Underlying causes may include, but are not limited to: lack of understanding of the purpose and procedures for record-keeping; inadequate supervision to ensure staff follow-through; ineffective forms or tracking systems; and inadequate time allowed to complete records and reports.

Similarly, **Example C** on page 17 shows a weakness within the service area of *Parent Involvement.* Underlying causes may include, but are not limited to: staff not understanding the value of parent involvement or not knowing how to promote it; inadequate supervision to assist staff to support parent involvement; and ineffective tracking systems to promptly identify any problems.

Identifying underlying causes is critical for the development of effective strategies to promote continuous quality improvement. In Stage 4, you will apply the information you have uncovered about underlying causes to the development of a Program Improvement Plan and a T/TA Plan.

PRISM Framework: Analysis of Areas to Strengthen

Systems	Child Development and Health Services					Family and Community Partnerships			Program Design
	Prevention and Early Intervention	Individualization	Disabilities Services	Curriculum and Assessment	Child Outcomes	Family Partnership	Parent Involvement	Community Partnerships	Facilities, Materials.., Equip, Transp
Program Governance									
Planning									
Communication									
Record-Keeping and Reporting									
Ongoing Monitoring									
Self-Assessment									
Human Resources									
Fiscal Management									
ERSEA									

Services and Partnerships

PRISM Framework: Analysis of Areas to Strengthen

SAMPLE

Services and Partnerships

Systems	Child Development and Health Services					Family and Community Partnerships			Program Design
	Prevention and Early Intervention	Individualization	Disabilities Services	Curriculum and Assessment	Child Outcomes	Family Partnership	Parent Involvement	Community Partnerships	Facilities, Materials., Equip, Transp
Program Governance							Parents on Policy Council rarely attend meetings	No community representatives on Policy Council	
Planning					No evidence of child outcome data being used for program planning		Parents were not involved in development of program plans and policies		
Communication							Limited materials for parents in languages other than English		
Record-Keeping and Reporting	Lack of follow-up on recorded changes in children's behaviors while on medication	Twenty-five percent of lesson plans reviewed lacked documentation of individualization	Interagency agreements with LEA's are outdated			Inconsistent Family Partnership Agreements—some missing information	Inconsistent documentation of parent involvement in classroom curriculum		No work order system for maintenance issues
Ongoing Monitoring									
Self-Assessment							Parents were not provided an opportunity to participate in last year's self-assessment		
Human Resources							Parents did not participate in the recruitment and screening of Head Start employees		
Fiscal Management									
ERSEA									Program is under-enrolled by more than 20%

Issue: Program XYZ is more than 20% under-enrolled.
What are the underlying causes of under-enrollment for this program?

In addition to the Self-Assessment Booklets, it would be helpful to review:
- Community Assessment
- Staff surveys
- Parent surveys
- Community partnership agreements
- Enrollment data from past years
- Program recruitment policies and procedures
- Program waitlists
- Other sources identified by the Self-Assessment leadership team

Questions to consider:
- Has the community population changed in the past year?
- How are program options meeting the community's needs?
- How does the program ensure services are available and accessible to families?
- Is the under-enrollment program-wide or limited to some sites?
- Is there a waitlist? Is this list program-wide or limited to some sites?
- How does the program know the extent to which parents are satisfied with services?
- What is the reputation of the Head Start program within the community?

Underlying causes:

A review of the Community Assessment shows that program options are meeting the needs of families in the community, but that there has been a change in the community population over the past few years; many families have had to relocate in response to increasing housing costs in the northern part of the city. A review of enrollment and wait list documents reveals that under-enrollment is limited to sites in the northern part of the city. Sites in the southern part of the city have long waiting lists. It appears that the services provided by Program XYZ are not available for many eligible families in the southern part of the city, while classrooms are under-enrolled in the northern part of the city where fewer eligible families reside.

Developing strategies:

Plans to address under-enrollment in Program XYZ will need to focus on these underlying causes, and consider issues related to program design, site locations, transportation, wait-list policies and procedures, recruitment strategies, resources, and facilities, as well as other relevant management systems and service areas.

Issue: Program XYZ has demonstrated significant problems in its system of record-keeping and reporting across program service areas.
What are the underlying causes of systemic record keeping issues?

In addition to the Self-Assessment Booklets, it would be helpful to review:
- Child records
- Family partnership agreements
- Lesson plans
- Home visit and parent teacher conference forms
- Policies and procedures manual
- Staff Training logs
- Staff surveys
- Staff evaluations
- Supervision documentation
- LEAs
- Work order system
- Program plans

Questions to consider:
- Do program plans, procedures and policies clearly reflect record-keeping and reporting responsibilities and requirements?
- Are staff receiving adequate and ongoing training regarding their record-keeping and reporting roles and responsibilities?
- Are current forms and tracking systems efficient and effective?
- Does the supervision system include regular review and discussion of record-keeping and reporting documentation?
- Do staff work schedules allow time for record-keeping?

Underlying causes:

A review of staff surveys and evaluations reveals a lack of staff understanding of the purpose and procedures of record-keeping and reporting. In addition, supervision documentation does not address record-keeping and reporting responsibilities, and the tracking mechanism is unreliable.

Developing strategies:

Plans for improving the record-keeping and reporting system will need to focus on these underlying causes and address: ongoing staff development and competence; tracking systems that monitor services and ensure program compliance; supervisory systems; program policies and procedures regarding record-keeping and reporting; as well as other management areas to ensure strong and comprehensive systems that will support quality services.

Issue: Program XYZ has demonstrated a significant lack of parent involvement in the program.

What are the underlying causes for the lack of parent involvement for this program?

In addition to the Self-Assessment Booklets, it would be helpful to review:
- Policy Council roster and minutes
- Bylaws, in particular sections on maintaining membership
- Program plans
- Annual Self-Assessment and minutes from planning meetings
- Child/family records
- Parent surveys and program evaluations
- Staff/parent training records
- Hiring procedures and documentation of interviews
- Parent Committee minutes and notices
- Notices for parent meetings and program activities

Questions to consider:
- Does the program philosophy and culture promote parent involvement?
- Is there an expectation that parents are partners in all aspects of program planning and policy development?
- Are parent involvement and education activities responsive to the ongoing expressed needs of parents?
- Are there opportunities to include parents in the development of the program's curriculum and approach to child development and education?
- What methods are used to communicate with non-English speaking families?
- What role does staff play in supporting parent involvement?
- Does the supervision system include regular review and discussion of parent involvement?

Underlying causes:

The review of the Policy Council materials revealed a well-defined process for establishing a Council but lacked a process for maintaining membership. Bylaws did not include a process to monitor Policy Council attendance or replace members who have not attended. Written program plans include a separate section dedicated to parent involvement but do not indicate how parents would be active participants in program operations, planning and development. A monthly calendar of parent activities is distributed to parents the last week of every month. It is the only method used to notify parents of upcoming events and is printed in English only.

Developing strategies:

Plans for increasing parent involvement in Program XYZ will need to focus on these underlying causes, and consider ways in which the program's mission statement, philosophy and culture are aligned with program practices and how policies and procedures integrate parent involvement throughout the program. In addition, plans to encourage parent involvement will need to address the program's communication systems and support effective staff and parent leadership.

Classifying and Prioritizing Areas to Strengthen

Use the information collected through the Self-Assessment process to classify the areas to strengthen. Complete the following **Priorities Worksheets** as you identify three types of concerns you want to address in your final Program Improvement Plan:

Section 1: Health and Safety. The team should determine if there are areas of concern that affect the health and safety of children, families and staff. The team will need to resolve these issues immediately. All health and safety issues should be considered *high priority.*

Section 2: Short-Term Improvements. The team should identify any service area or operational issues that managers and content area experts can address in a quick and efficient manner.

Section 3: Long-Term Improvements. The team should also identify any major areas of concern that require prolonged effort. Often, these are systemic issues that cut across program areas and services. These may necessitate major program improvement. Long term improvements typically require an action plan that entails a focused effort by key staff and program leaders, creative strategies, time commitment and the shift or addition of program resources through expansion or development of community partnerships.

Frequently, a team will need to prioritize multiple program improvement goals to ensure that it does not jeopardize its chance of success by spreading resources too thin.

As you prioritize the areas you want to strengthen, you may want to have the team revisit the core objectives of Head Start found at the beginning of the Guide:

- Enhance children's growth and development
- Strengthen families as the primary nurturers of their children
- Provide children with educational, health and nutritional services
- Link children and families to needed community services
- Ensure well-managed programs that involve parents in decision-making

Program managers will want to give priority to areas where they are not meeting these core objectives. Goals that address weaknesses in management systems or service areas also deserve top priority. For example, teams may place a priority on the following issues:

- Lack of an active Policy Council
- Significant under-enrollment
- Failure to conduct behavioral screenings
- Inadequate ongoing monitoring systems

PRIORITIES WORKSHEET

Section 1: Health and Safety

Health and Safety
Health and Safety issues are considered high priority and must be resolved immediately.
(List in order of importance)

Areas to Strengthen	Data Sources	Timeframe	Need for T/TA?

Use the last column of this worksheet to note the area where training and/or technical assistance may be needed.

PRIORITIES WORKSHEET

Section 2: Short-Term Improvements

Short-Term Improvements
Operational issues that managers and content area experts can address in a quick and efficient manner.
(List in order of importance)

Areas to Strengthen	Data Sources	Timeframe	Need for T/TA?

Use the last column of this worksheet to note the area where training and/or technical assistance may be needed.

PRIORITIES WORKSHEET

Section 3: Long-Term Improvements

Long-Term Improvements
Systemic issues and major areas of change that take significant time, resources and commitment of program leaders.
(List in order of importance)

Areas to Strengthen	Data Sources	Timeframe	Need for T/TA?

Use the last column of this worksheet to note the area where training and/or technical assistance may be needed.

Stage 4: Strengthening Your Program

Overview

Key participants in Stage 4 include:

Your team of managers and program leaders designated to coordinate the process, as well as analyze and incorporate the results into program improvement efforts. Again, you may want to include your TA specialist as you incorporate your results into program improvement efforts.

In this stage you will:

- Recall the areas to strengthen that you identified in Stage 3 and develop plans for program improvement by:
  - ➤ Identifying resources available to you that can support your program improvement effort such as:
    - ✓ Expertise within your program
    - ✓ Regional Office staff
    - ✓ Other Head Start programs
    - ✓ Outside consultants, trainers and technical assistance providers
    - ✓ Head Start Technical Assistance Network
  - ➤ Designing specific plans to achieve your goals that include:
    - ✓ Goal identification
    - ✓ Desired outcomes
    - ✓ Action steps
    - ✓ Persons responsible
    - ✓ Resources
    - ✓ Timelines
- Develop your Training and Technical Assistance Plan
- Determine how you will evaluate your progress toward completing your Program Improvement Plan
- Reflect on your experience with the Self-Assessment process and determine ways that it can be improved for the following year
- Provide your Head Start program specialist with a brief summary of your Self-Assessment including program strengths identified by the Self-Assessment team and your plans for addressing areas that need improvement

Stage 4: Strengthening Your Program

Developing Plans for Program Improvement

Now it is time to develop the goals for program improvement with members of the leadership team and make concrete plans to move the program forward in its quality improvement efforts. Leadership team members may choose to use the attached **Program Improvement Plan** on page 7 or use a format more familiar to the program for this purpose. The team begins this process by identifying all of the available resources that can be applied to the plan. Your TA specialist is available to assist you in this regard.

Identifying Resources

Engage members of the team in a discussion to generate a complete list of resources that can be incorporated into your plan for strengthening the program. Record their ideas in the **Identifying Resources Worksheet** that is attached on the following page. As you compile your list of resources, include resources that are available within the program, external to the program and within the TA Network.

Resources available within the program might include:
- Members of the governing body, Policy Council parents and community representatives, and members of your various advisory groups who have expertise in a variety of different areas
- Staff members who hold expertise in specific areas
- Other professionals within the grantee agency

External sources include:
- Community Partners
- Peers in other Head Start programs
- Workshops, conferences, and seminars
- Academic institutions and courses
- Consultants and trainers

Resources within the TA Network include:
- Your locally-based TA specialist who is available to support your improvement effort, can link you to TA content specialists, and help you to identify and access other resources both within and outside the TA Network

If you are seeking clarification on Federal policy or Head Start regulations, you should contact your Head Start program specialist at the Regional Office.

Identifying Resources Worksheet

The following resources are available to assist in program improvement efforts. These resources should be incorporated, as needed, into the action plans developed for each goal area.

Resources	Comments

Developing Your Program Improvement Plan

In Stage 3 you determined the specific health and safety, short-term, and long-term improvements you would like to see in your program. Your next step is to involve team members and staff with distinct expertise in designing specific action plans to serve as your roadmap for change.

Goals

Revisit the priorities you identified during Stage 3 and determine how they can be translated into goals that will strengthen the program and improve outcomes for children and families. Examples of goals might include:

- Redesigning Head Start management systems such as communication, record-keeping, or ongoing monitoring
- Improving services in a particular content area
- Strengthening professional development of staff

Outcomes

The team should identify the desired outcomes relative to each goal. A desired outcome should be stated as an end-result that will demonstrate improvement. For example, if the Self-Assessment or other data sources indicate that there is a lack of documented follow-up in child/family health files, a desired outcome might be: "All identified child/family health issues are tracked and appropriate follow-up action taken." However, if the issue is actually that the health issues are being tracked and follow-up actions taken, but not documented, then the desired outcome statement might be: "All follow-up actions taken are documented in children's health files".

You may want to divide your leadership team into small groups, assigning members to work on one or two goals most aligned with their area of interest and expertise. Assign managers and your program's content area specialists to address goals related to the service areas in which they work.

Action Steps

For each of your goals, you must identify the necessary steps to reach the desired outcome successfully. As you work through this process, consider ways in which the program can build upon its existing strengths.

Action steps might include:

- Modifying policies and procedures
- Shifting resources from one program area to another
- Securing new resources
- Developing new partnerships
- Obtaining training or technical assistance

Provide each team with copies of the **Program Improvement Plan** on the following page. The plan provides space for team members to identify:

- Goals
- Outcomes
- Action steps
- Person(s) responsible
- Resources that will be applied to the effort
- Expected dates of completion

As a final step, program leaders should coordinate the new **Program Improvement Plan** with other plans that address program improvement efforts such as a *Quality Improvement Plan* or strategic plan. This will help you to:

- Reexamine and identify the goals that are most critical to the program
- Avoid moving in too many different directions and spreading resources too thin
- Improve the likelihood of attaining goals and reaching higher outcomes for children and families
- Use the results to develop a comprehensive T/TA Plan for your program

Program Improvement Plan

GOAL:

DESIRED OUTCOMES:

ACTION STEP	PERSON(s) RESPONSIBLE	RESOURCES	DATES

Training and Technical Assistance Plan

One strategy related to the overall continuous quality improvement process will be the development and implementation of a Training and Technical Assistance Plan. The development of this plan should be a natural progression from the Self-Assessment process and the development of the Program Improvement Plan. The Regional Office and the TA Network will work with you as you develop and implement your T/TA Plan. This plan will need to be submitted with your annual grant application.

Your Regional Office and the TA Network will work together to support you through this process and help you implement the specific activities outlined in your T/TA Plan.

Monitoring and Assessing Progress in Reaching Goals and Improving Outcomes

To ensure that programs achieve the goals they have established, it is critical to identify a process for monitoring and assessing implementation of the Program Improvement Plan. When following up on the Program Improvement Plan it is important to ask:

- Have we completed the action steps as outlined in the plan? If not, why not?
- What barriers do we face in implementing change? How can they be overcome?
- Do we need to make adjustments to our plan?
- Are we making substantial and timely progress towards reaching our goal?
- Are we likely to attain our anticipated outcome at our present rate of progress?

By conducting routine follow-ups, the team can identify barriers to change and make necessary adjustments to the original plan. You may discover during a follow-up review that you need to institute new strategies and action steps to achieve your intended outcome or that you may want to apply new and different resources to the plan.

Evaluating Your Self-Assessment System

Before adjourning your Self-Assessment leadership team, while memories are still fresh, you should solicit their assistance in evaluating the entire Self-Assessment process. The feedback they provide will give you valuable information that can be used to refine and improve the process for subsequent years. The following **Evaluating Your Self-Assessment System Worksheet** can help you in that evaluation.

Evaluating Your Self-Assessment System Worksheet

Think about the process that you recently used to conduct your Self-Assessment. What worked well for team members, staff, parents, etc.?

_____

_____

What aspects of the Self-Assessment did not work well?

_____

_____

Were there enough participants so that the team was inclusive and able to spread the work out appropriately?

_____

_____

Was adequate time allowed for team members to complete their work? Did the time frame cause undue interruptions for staff or others who had to be responsive to the Self-Assessment team's need for information?

_____

_____

How do the results of the Self-Assessment compare with your most recent Federal monitoring review?

_____

_____

What would you do differently next year? Make specific recommendations that can be considered for next year's Self-Assessment.

_____

_____

Sharing Your Results with the Regional Office

The Head Start Bureau views Self-Assessment as a critical management and evaluation tool. Strong, well-managed programs conduct comprehensive Self-Assessments based on *Head Start Program Performance Standards* and use the results to guide continuous quality improvement towards program excellence. The following **Regional Office Summary Report** should be used to summarize the results of the Self-Assessment.

The following information should be submitted with your annual grant reapplication: summary of the annual Self-Assessment, Program Improvement Plan, and T/TA Plan.

Celebration

Now that you have completed this year's Self-Assessment process, it is time to celebrate this important team accomplishment and to acknowledge and thank all who have participated.

Program Self-Assessment Results
Regional Office Summary Report
Program Year 20___

Program Name:_____

Dates of Self-Assessment:_____

Participants in the Self-Assessment Process: Provide the positions or titles of the various stakeholders who participated in the Self-Assessment process such as staff, parents, Policy Council, governing body, community partners (no need to list specific names).

Program strengths identified:

Strength	Description
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
Other	

Goals for program improvement:

Goals for Improvement	Description
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
Other	

_____   _____
Head Start Director   Date   **Policy Council Chair   Date**

Attach your Training and Technical Assistance Plan here.